Valachi on the Stand *Murray Kempton*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

October 12, 1963, 35 cents

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VIETNAM

What Can Be Done Now?

Jerry Rose *Bernard B. Fall*

Ho Thong Minh

Trading with Communists

Charles A. Cooper

Why Bosch Fell

Victor Alba

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T.R.B. *from Washington*

Stalling Around

★ Congress is in its 10th month and hasn't got off the ground. Passage of either civil rights or tax cut bills now seems problematical. Behind those two is a gigantic log-jam of other tragically needed legislation – health, schools, welfare – some of it waiting for years, decades, for action.

We lose sight of the whole in the details. The big picture is that American history is like an alternating, two-cycle engine, a period of advance (liberalism) followed by a period of consolidation (conservatism). Both are necessary, we believe. The cycles come at about 15-year intervals. The advance period is overdue, but is stymied in Congress. It's a new world trying to get born.

Of course what Congress does or doesn't do on civil rights won't stop the social revolution now underway; it will merely decide how it comes – whether the revolution takes place in the streets or in the courts. There is little sign that the Southern bloc, with conservative GOP help, will let Congress act. A filibuster was inevitable months ago, the minute the President introduced the civil rights bill. The prospective filibuster has brought a slow-down in the whole 1963 legislative stream.

And consider tax cuts. Britain introduced a stimulating tax cut when Mr. Kennedy first proposed his, and under the swift parliamentary system it was approved in a fortnight. It was proportionately larger than the Washington cut. And even now we don't know if that can get ours through.

For a century it hasn't really mattered too much in most cases if Congress dawdled. But the tempo of everything has wildly accelerated. In economics, the normal upturn of a business cycle is only a couple of years. If Congress is to control the subsequent recession it must act swiftly and flexibly with tax cuts or other devices. But Congress is as archaic as a stage coach to meet such matters.

Take civil rights. We could have civil war now except for the docile tradition of the Negroes; but the Southern minority in Congress, entrenched in seniority-won committee chairmanships, can block forward movement. Schools decay, unemployment continues, tension rises in the South, but Congress doesn't act; not even with a Democratic President and Democratic majorities.

It's easy to blame Mr. Kennedy; we could all manage better than he does. But is it fair? How about the system itself within which he must operate? In France they got tired of the impotency of the legislature after a while; they turned matters over to a democratic Strong Man. We don't mean to be melodramatic about the USA; we don't expect de Gaulle here. But you can't stop the play of that two-cycle, historical engine indefinitely; something is bound to give, sooner or later: race riots, recession, or perhaps a slower and more sinister moral decay.

Barry Sundust

★ We detect a plaintive note in Republicans about Goldwater. Everyone is attacking him at once, they complain. It is true, we think, that he has got himself out in front too far, too fast. Last week *Newsweek* virtually nominated him, and *Time* virtually elected him. He is bound to be a Democratic target under such circumstances. Besides that, he is terribly vulnerable. Goldwater is like a dashing playboy who has been having a wonderful time with the lovely party girls for years and then, suddenly, to his horror, finds himself trapped and walking down the aisle.

Goldwater, whom the Navaho Indians aptly christened "Barry Sundust," seemed as safe as a man could reasonably be from a Presidential nomination. On the strength of this he averaged 1,000 speeches a year giving anxious conservatives easy, simplified, black-and-white (and silly) solutions for all their problems. And now, poor chap, he is walking to the altar! *NYTimes*man Reston reported last week that Sundust has hired an electric computer to help him analyze all the myriad comments he has made on such things as Cuba and taxation.

The Wall Street Journal complains that Goldwater critics are making charges of things that the Senator is "alleged" to have said; General Eisenhower states unhappily that he is "unclear" about Goldwater views. Well, it is a shame to leave them in ignorance. The Goldwater views, written by himself, are available for anybody with 50 cents for *The Conscience of a Conservative*, or 60 cents for *Why Not Victory*, in paperbacks. The views should bring an internationalist like Ike right up out of his chair.

Let's take the first book, and (for Ike's convenience), here are the page references: "We should withdraw recognition from all Communist governments," p. 123; the UN "is in part Communist," p. 114; foreign aid "has created a vast reservoir of anti-Americanism," p. 97; "we ought to present the Kremlin with an ultimatum . . . and be prepared . . . to move a highly mobile task force equipped with appropriate nuclear weapons" to back up US-instigated satellite revolts, "if the ultimatum is rejected," p. 125.

If General Eisenhower is too busy with gold to do much reading he might note that the Senate recently ratified a nuclear test ban treaty, 80-19, and that the dashing Senator, wrapped in his invisible Air Force Major General's cape, voted "No." A Kennedy-Goldwater race would inevitably turn, we think, on the peace issue, and we can't believe Americans would vote for Goldwater and war.

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Not Enough

The six-year history of the United States Commission on Civil Rights has always had in it elements of "The Perils of Pauline" and this summer was one of the cruelest that scenario has yet provided. The Commission is temporary; its mandate must be renewed every two years. This year the Administration and Congress paltered so long that emergency legislation was needed to grant it an extension of one more year's life. But the damage of this ordeal will be hard to repair; 26 of the Commission's key employees left its staff during the last two months of uncertainty. Those departing included its General Counsel, the chief of its Education Section, the directing staff of its Administration of Justice Section, and the Director of its State Advisory Committees. Now Staff Director Berl Bernhard has announced that he will be leaving too, and there are reports that some of the Commission members themselves are reluctant to continue unless its mandate is made permanent by the Congress.

The Commission distressed some in the Administration last spring when it suggested that all federal aid be withdrawn from the state of Mississippi until it mended its ways. The Commission's biennial report issued this month can hardly please the Administration much more.

Here are some of the findings in the report:

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare continues to make grants to Southern states to construct and remodel hospitals which bar Negro patients. Since 1946, the Public Health Service has granted $32 million to hospitals serving whites exclusively and a little over $4 million to hospitals reserved for Negroes. The federal hospital aid program is based on the Hill-Burton Act which recognizes the principle of "separate but equal facilities." The Public Health Service has replied to Commission complaints with the statement that "the authority of grant recipients to administer their hospitals includes the authority to segregate patients on the basis of race."

The Administration's programs for training skilled labor are permeated with segregation. Health, Education and Welfare is, for example, responsible for training technicians under the National Defense Education Act. Of the 20,000 trainees in the South, 4.3 percent are Negroes. In the South, the program is in operation at 142 all-white schools, 14 all-Negro schools and three non-segregated schools. Despite the best efforts of the Department of Labor, the depressed area retraining programs of the Area Redevelopment Act and the Manpower Development and Training Act are similarly discouraging.

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"There were no ARA Negro trainees in Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia – states where nonwhite unemployment ranged from 19.6 to 40.5 percent in 1960." Alabama does not have a single Negro among its 423 ARA trainees, although the poverty of Negroes is a major factor in the low income status which makes an area eligible for ARA funds.

The President's Executive Order banning federal assistance to segregated housing is now almost a year old. "Little has been done to implement it so far," the Commission reports.

The right-to-vote section of the 1957 Civil Rights Law has been a failure despite what the Commission credits as "a determined effort" by the Kennedy Administration. In 1956, just five percent of the voting age Negroes in 100 Southern counties were registered to vote. Today the figure has risen to just 8.3 percent, "despite the passage of two civil rights acts, the institution of 36 suits by the Department of Justice and the operation of dozens of private registration drives." In all its suits, the Justice Department has won a substantial victory only in the middle district of Alabama. The Commission recommends that the President be given the power he has requested to appoint temporary registrars in counties where discrimination is proven and, should that device fail, that the Congressional representation of any offending state be reduced according to the proportion of its population which is barred from the ballot.

This last solution, generally thought of as extreme, turns out to have the support of Dean Robert Storey, head of the Southwestern Law Institute and of Robert Rankin, of Duke University, the Commission's two Southern members. In their concurring opinion Professors Storey and Rankin recall that, until now, they have opposed the full exercise of federal power to assure the right to vote because of their concern "with means rather than ends." Now they reluctantly favor "drastic change in the means" because experience has taught them that, with gentler methods, "the evil of arbitrary disenfranchise has not diminished materially."

The Administration then is not moving far enough for these two conspicuously moderate Southerners. The issue of civil rights, because of their very closeness to it, has come to be a single and primary issue to every one of the Commissioners; to the President, however important, it is only one of several issues. Last week, Senator Keating, of New York, on behalf of the Rockefeller interest, spoke of the Commission's latest report as the best account of the inadequacies of the Kennedy Civil Rights program that has been issued so far. It is hardly a document quite that satisfactory to Republicans; but, while it says that this Administration has done more than any other for civil rights, it says very clearly that the Administration has not done enough.

Winning the West

His tour of the West was only a few hours old when the President turned it into an educational effort of the kind that he has never before undertaken. At the brightly-lighted Field House in Duluth, on a rainy and foggy night, he had been scheduled to discuss the Administration's depressed areas program, which is of particular interest to the people of northern Minnesota where the plunderers of earlier and easier days had despoiled the forests and where the once rich iron ore deposits have long since been turned into swords and plowshares. Instead, he talked about world responsibilities, and the audience seemed to like what it heard.

Wherever Mr. Kennedy went he not only spoke of America's world role and the hideous complexities of both national and international problems; he also was constantly reminded by what he saw of our involvement with the 20th Century. In North Dakota there were shimmering wheat storage bins standing like sentinels on the prairies; in these bins was the surplus wheat that may soon become a harbinger of the mellowing of Russian-American relations. At the Air Force bases which have eaten up much of the Western range, the President saw America at the ready, however much the current Cold War temperatures may be approaching a normal reading. From the air Mr. Kennedy got an occasional glimpse of the concrete bunkers beneath which are buried the hardened, underground missile silos of the atomic age. At the Hanford, Washington, atomic energy works he used a nuclear wand tipped with uranium to activate a crane to break ground for the nuclear power plant; the uranium was 20 years old and came from the first fuel element that produced plutonium for the atomic bombs which ended World War II and created many problems disturbing Mr. Kennedy today.

Westerners like to say that the valleys and peaks under the big sky make a man forget his troubles, but in Mr. Kennedy's case the West seemed to set him thinking about the aspect of the Presidency that he has neglected. Never until this trip had the President made any sort of a sustained effort to explain in simple language to the American people how he sees the world and the nation. His press conferences jump too fast from one complicated problem to another. The same criticism can be made of his other television appearances with commentators and of his efforts to get his message across through his favorite columnists and editors. He has almost choked the Congress with special messages, but he has seldom taken to the radio and television as he did on the eve of the tax vote in the House to explain what he is trying to do.

And what was the effect of the President's efforts to show the fallacy of such "all or nothing" proposals as leaving the United Nations; breaking off diplomatic re-

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lations with the Soviet Union and other countries "of whom we disapprove"; ending foreign aid to countries that will not do exactly what we want them to do; resuming nuclear testing and "turning our back on the rest of mankind"? In Salt Lake City his speech was interrupted five times by applause. At the Yellowstone County Fairgrounds in Billings, Montana, he was cheered when he mentioned the nuclear test-ban treaty. Everywhere the President went the crowds gave him a polite if not always an enthusiastic reception, though the President was in hostile territory. Of the 11 states he visited he carried only Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Nevada in 1960. Politicians think that Mr. Kennedy can win California, the Western electoral bonanza, in 1964. But of the other Western and Midwestern states, only Montana is regarded as a good Democratic possibility next year. The Midwest and the West seem still to be heavily Republican, and passionately Goldwater. Nevertheless, the President's trip can only have helped him. A Presidential visit dominates the newspapers and the radio and television stations in a state. It gets people talking about the President, particularly in the many Midwestern and Western states where the grist of the routine Washington news often rates only a few unenlightening paragraphs a day.

Hard-to-Find Quality

The deterioration in the major federal administrative agencies that culminated in the late Fifties in a crisis of corruption and incompetence, began in the Truman Administration with the failure to reappoint a number of able, dedicated men and the appointment and reappointment of hacks and cronies. Now the Kennedy Administration, whose record of administrative appointments has been good, has hesitated to reappoint a brilliantly qualified Federal Trade Commissioner, Philip Elman, former assistant to the US Solicitor General.

Mr. Elman has the respect of all professional observers of the Federal Trade Commission, and the unqualified admiration of the vast majority of them. He has been something of a burr under the Commission's saddle, and has sometimes offended the Commission's Congressional constituency for he is an administrative craftsman who does no man's bidding, and whose sole predisposition is toward professional excellence. It is not that the alternative candidate, put forward by the Senators from Massachusetts, is not reasonably well-qualified. The point is that if a man like Elman were denied reappointment, men of like qualities – hard enough to find anyway – will not wish to be appointed to begin with, and will not wish to make a dedicated career of administrative service. That is why the decision on Mr. Elman has special significance.

Big Three Talks

After Lord Home's address to the UN General Assembly last week, a delegate was overheard to comment that the British Foreign Secretary had been "thinking more about the electors in Britain than about the audience in New York." Lord Home's theme was the perennially popular one in Britain of summit meetings and "peace in our time." He affirmed categorically that the Soviets have renounced once and for all the doctrine of war's inevitability, and he indorsed, though with some modification, Mr. Gromyko's call for an 18-power summit meeting to deal with disarmament, preferably in Moscow – a proposal the US has ignored.

But the most realistic part of Lord Home's speech had to do with nuclear materials into orbit.

It is no wonder Messrs. Home, Rusk and Gromyko are finding themselves so much in agreement on the banning of atomic weapons from outer space: nobody ever intended to put them there; intercontinental rockets do the same work more efficiently.

There has also been press speculation about the possibility of posting observers on both sides of the Iron Curtain as part of the system of warning against surprise attack. Here agreement is stymied. Neither Secretary Rusk nor Lord Home can agree to posting observers only in West and East Germany, for that would be considered in Bonn as some kind of "recognition" of the division of Germany. And since de Gaulle is offering himself as Germany's most reliable ally, Washington and London are taking great pains to prove their reliability. Washington and London want observers to be posted in all the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. That would be desirable, but who is going to believe that it may soon be possible to have Americans stationed in the Urals or Russians in Phoenix?

Blocking the proliferation of atomic weapons – another item on the agenda of the three foreign ministers in New York – likewise has its problems. To the Russians, Kennedy's plan for a multilateral force in which the Germans, Italians, Greeks, Turks, etc., participate, is itself an example of proliferation, and especially menacing because it involves the Germans.

The big secret of the New York talks (but an open secret, since briefings have taken place after the encounter of any two of the three concerned parties) is that the three foreign ministers have been speaking very little about the substance of items on their agenda. One informed official has explained that, "The ministers feel that the most important thing is just to talk, to keep the political climate warm. If they agree on something soon, don't expect anything spectacular; it probably will be an agreement permitting the Americans to build a new Embassy in Moscow and the Russians a new Embassy in Washington."

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"Che Cosa?" Means "What's That?"

by Murray Kempton

We have the word of *The New York Times* that Joseph Valachi is a witness whose disclosures deserve to be taken as "the most detailed and authoritative ever made on the national crime syndicate." Valachi's testimony before the Senators, accepting that lofty station, appears in its early stages most significant as an instance of the special genius of American merchandising for the wider and wider distribution of goods of worse and worse quality. Never before Joseph Valachi has a witness given such broad circulation to the myth of the American Mafia and never before him has a witness left that myth with less illusion of substance.

Valachi remembers that in 1930 he took an oath in blood to live by the knife and die by the gun as a soldier in Cosa Nostra, the grand army of the syndicate, and that he served Vito Genovese, its boss of bosses, until 1960 when Genovese ordered his execution in Atlanta Penitentiary.

Attorney General Kennedy appears to believe that Cosa Nostra is a centrally directed criminal cartel which has a business in billions and which can only be contained if the Justice Department is given power to tap its wires. Chairman McClellan of the Senate Investigating Committee has said that the issue is whether this country is to be controlled by the government of the United States or by the invisible government of Vito Genovese, who happens at the moment to be a heart patient in the hospital at Leavenworth prison.

Genovese, according to Valachi, controls his own family – 450 soldiers – along with the families of Tommy Luccese and Carlo Gambino. But he has never been able to control the Brooklyn families of the late Joe Profaci and of Joe Bananas. We are thus asked to believe in a "boss of all bosses" whose writ does not run across the river to Brooklyn. When Joe Valachi joined Cosa Nostra, he says he took a vow "to kill on orders." But Cosa Nostra seems to have offered him nothing in return beyond its annual Christmas dinner. He made his living with what he could find: slot machines, pinball, the numbers, the contracting and dressmaking business, the wartime sale of ration stamps. Sam Accardo, of New Jersey, no soldier of Genovese, put him in the way of the ration stamps, from which he earned $150,000 in one year.

As to Genovese, "he made big money, but he didn't cut anyone in."

"He has, uh, a big lottery, the Italian lottery. He has slot machines and gambling. He had Cuba when it was there. He has his hand in a lot of things." Vito Genovese does not appear to have attended very seriously to Machiavelli's instructions on the duties of the Prince to his subordinates. It seems odd to anyone not practiced enough at believing in the Mafia to fall on his knees in the presence of the mystery to find that Valachi should think primarily of the Italian lottery when he describes Genovese's awful power. The Italian lottery is an enterprise so ethnically parochial that its slips are printed in Italian and its winning number is based on the last three figures in a day's total sales on the Milanese stock exchange. The Italian gangster has, of course, always lived off the Italian community; Vito Genovese would appear to be still trapped there waiting his chance at General Motors. Experts whose authority depends on the generosity of their estimates have said that Genovese makes $20,000 a week from the Italian lottery. That adds up to one million dollars a year; Valachi can assign no other definite source of income to the boss of bosses. It would appear then that it would take a thousand Vito Genoveses to account for the first of the billions Robert Kennedy tells us that Cosa Nostra extorts from the American people every year.

The details of Cosa Nostra's power were no more impressive. Valachi did say that it was a source of protection; if you had a numbers bank and one of your competitors hired away a valued runner, you could go to Cosa Nostra and its council would see that he was returned to you. Cosa Nostra then does not direct the numbers industry; it serves only as arbitrator among competing small businessmen.

There is a touch of paranoia in all witnesses who come to us from conspiracies; the very life of every investigation depends to a degree on the acceptance of that paranoia as worthy of entire credence. Valachi, for example, met Genovese in Atlanta and they discussed the disappearance of Tony Bender, until then a valued Genovese lieutenant. Genovese said that what had happened to Tony was all for the best, because Tony wasn't like him and Valachi and hadn't the temperament to do time in prison. "In our language," said Valachi, this meant that Genovese had ordered Bender's execution. If Valachi were not there to give us the properly arcane interpretation of his language, we might otherwise have taken what Genovese said as only a philosophical observation.

A few days afterward, Genovese sentenced Valachi to death. They were both in Atlanta at the time; Genovese had gotten Valachi as his cellmate simply by asking for him, the way, we are to understand, that Harvard boys choose roommates. Genovese pronounced the sentence by kissing Valachi's hand. Valachi heard

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Ralph Wagner, a cellmate, say "the kiss of death under his breath." Wagner is a Caucasian of North European descent and thus no soldier of Cosa Nostra; we can only assume that he recognized this secret Mafia ritual because he had seen it on "The Untouchables." The next day Genovese saw to it that Wagner and another cellmate friend of Valachi's were sent to solitary so as to be out of the way when the deed was done. The federal government, if it is correct in its estimate of the weight of Valachi's testimony, seems to be powerful enough to put Vito Genovese into Atlanta Penitentiary and thereafter powerless to keep him from running it. The prison was full of Cosa Nostra members, all faithful to the orders of the boss of bosses; Valachi ticked off the names of a dozen or so. Under ordinary circumstances, this roster might have been taken as evidence that the government, federal, is doing a reasonably good job of containing the government, invisible; but Valachi managed to convey the sense that Vito had brought them all there just for the occasion of his assassination. "I knew," he said, "that five or six of them would get around me on the bocce court and one of them would stick a knife in me and nobody could be arrested." Two days later he was walking in the yard and was confronted by a man who looked like one of his Cosa Nostra assassins-elect, so he picked up a piece of lead pipe that happened to be lying around that superbly-managed federal prison and struck his would-be killer on the back of the head three times and was chagrined to find later that he had violated the ultimate code of Cosa Nostra by killing an utter stranger. He swore thereafter that he would avenge himself by telling all he knew; and it is upon this record of sober balance and sound judgment that he is presented to us as the best witness possible on the invisible government.

There is a wonderful innocence about real life in proceedings of this sort. Valachi sits there and explains that he was a scow captain when he was 16 and then turned to burglary; Senator Mundt, of course, leans across the table and asks, "And then you never did a hard day's work afterwards, did you?"

Never did a hard day's work? Valachi went on to describe an exhausting career at smash-and-grab, which he departed as a victim of technological unemployment because the police began equipping their cars with radios and keeping the street lights on 24 hours a day. He turned then to Cosa Nostra and ended pushing dope. Men push dope from simple necessity; it is a dangerous business performed in the most depressing surroundings and for comfort, cannot be compared with something honorable like a soft-drink franchise or the sale of private member bills.

There will always be an official forum for memories like those of Joseph Valachi because the myth of the Mafia fills a real inner need in everyone who thinks himself respectable. The Mafia performs its rites in another language; its very structure is alien and describable only in alien words like *consiglieri* and *borgata*; its oaths are taken in Sicilian and in blood. This fits our hope that all sin is alien. Even Joe Valachi hates foreigners; he cannot, he says, endure "greaseballs," that is native-born Italians who aren't "civilized like us because we go to a cabaret and to them that's a mark of sin." "It is," says Joe Valachi, "a different way of living." We believe in the Mafia because, without it, we would have to accept the fact that crime can be American and thus a taint of our blood and our fault.

FOREIGN REPORTS

HONDURAS AND VENEZUELA: *Electioneering*

★ Repercussions from the coup that toppled Juan Bosch came fast. In Honduras where elections were scheduled for this Sunday, the Army was encouraged by the Dominican example to stage a coup. It claims the president, Villeda Morales, is too soft on Communists. (Actually under Morales Communists lost ground.) What the Army really feared, however, was that Modesto Rodas Alvarado, candidate of the governing Liberal Party, would favor the national police force over the Army.

In Venezuela where elections are to be held December 1, parachute troops were flown to Caracas to reinforce defense against terrorists. If Betancourt survives through the election, he will be the first democratically-chosen president of Venezuela to serve out a full term. Caracas is deceptively quiet, but bombings and sabotage by the Communist-led Armed Forces of National Liberation are clearly on the increase. By the government's own admission 200 people have been killed during the last several months in guerrilla fighting and "acts of terrorism." In a four-month period, 12 factories have been fired to dramatize opposition to "Yankee imperialism." The upper floor of the US Embassy has been bombed; US personnel have been stopped and searched; oil pipelines are blown up every week.

Many politicians outside Betancourt's *Accion Democratica* place blame for the terror on the President himself. Oscar Marquez, youth leader of the right-center Popular Republican Movement, says that "in the name of fighting Communism, Betancourt has destroyed democracy." Four of the six men running to succeed Betancourt make similar charges. Half the time Betancourt has been in office, they say, he has ruled under a "suspension of constitutional guarantees." Theoretically these are aimed only at the Communists. Their headquarters and newspapers are closed down, and hun-

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dreds of their members are arrested without the right of habeas corpus. In practice, however, the police have taken action against other political parties, particularly in the hinterlands.

The Communists are not bemoaning their fate: their influence has grown despite the repressions. In 1959 they received only five percent of the total national vote. Now Betancourt's party concedes the Communists will deliver a larger percentage this December.

Betancourt's strong political alliances of 1959 have fragmented. His own party has split twice, losing almost all the university and working-class youth and part of the intelligentsia. The Democratic Republican Union, second largest party, defected from the three-party coalition which ruled in 1959, and has joined the two Communist parties to help dominate the Congress. Communist leaders boast that while Betancourt set out to isolate them, they have in fact isolated him.

RUSSIA AND CHINA: *Two Touchy Borders*

★ The Chinese hinted in 1959 that they might have to revise treaties which recognized 19th Century Tsarist seizures of territories then belonging to the Manchu Empire. There are two lengths of boundaries involved, one in Sinkiang Province in north central Asia, and the other in Manchuria.

The Sinkiang border was established in the late 19th Century after the Russians had extracted large territorial concessions as a result of their general push East. The main source of friction is the Ili Valley section of Sinkiang, an area rich in oil, uranium and tin. The Chinese and Russians have fought for control of this region since the turn of the century. In 1944, revolutionaries friendly to Russia set up the East Turkestan Republic. Then, in 1949 the Chinese Army entered and established garrisons; colonists were shipped out from central China and Communist officials sent to proselytyze the nomadic native population.

Throughout the 1950's the Russians and the Chinese cooperated in exploiting the Ili's resources through two joint stock companies. The Chinese managed to get rid of the companies in 1955 as part of their price for supporting Khrushchev in his power struggle. Meanwhile, the Chinese have been less than successful in their efforts to carry the benefits of the "Great Leap Forward" to the people who live in the Ili Valley, many of whom have tried to get across the border into Russia.

The other sore point along the Sino-Soviet frontier is the Amur River which divides Manchuria from the Soviet Far East. The Chinese efforts to colonize and develop Manchuria have been intensive, and here also they are working in an area where the Russians historically have had considerable influence. Throughout the past decade both the Russians and Chinese cooperated to build hydroelectric projects and improve the navigability of the Amur, but relations are strained, and there has been shooting across the frontier.

GERMANY: *Dropping the Pilot*

★ Deprived of Chancellor Adenauer the West Germans may take a little time to gather confidence in the new Erhard administration. Doubts and worries already have been expressed by "Old Guard" Christian Democrats about the possibility of a change in foreign policy. Among these are the former Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defense, Brentano and Strauss, and the Minister for "Special Questions," Krone – who are demanding the stiffest possible line in the Cold War. Schroeder, the ablest German Foreign Minister since Stresemann, has come under heavy fire for his alleged readiness to search for "areas of agreement" between East and West. Erhard himself has been jockeyed into a "no change" pronouncement, which chiefly represents his fear that he might still be deprived of the Chancellorship.

But after two or three months of teething troubles a change in government should begin to bring solid benefits. Three in particular should be mentioned.

Erhard will be ready to decentralize authority sufficiently to allow the important ministries in Bonn greater policy initiative.

There is also likely to be more harmony between the two coalition partners, the Christian and Free Democrats. The Free Democratic chairman, Erich Mende, will come into the Cabinet. Mende speaks – more than any Christian Democratic Minister – for the younger generation. The smooth function of a coalition is requisite for most West European democracies. No coalition functioned smoothly under Konrad Adenauer.

The third advantage which should accrue to the coming Erhard Administration is a more balanced relationship with the Federal Republic's allies. Adenauer allowed his honest desire for reconciliation with France to become an obsession. A drawing together of West Germany and France was in the interest of the whole Western alliance, but this should not have presupposed that the Federal Republic should attach itself to de Gaulle's coattails.

Erhard will not consider doing anything which could damage the roots of Franco-German understanding. But the new Chancellor believes in the wider Atlantic Community and he believes particularly strongly in the association of free states in virtually total freedom of economic relations. He will probably visualize the Six – as he will visualize his cabinet – as a team. He may even, in time, be able to begin again negotiations for Britain's entry into the Common Market.

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Trading with the Communists

by Charles A. Cooper

The recent sale of $500 million of Canadian wheat to the Soviet Union is only one example of burgeoning trade between East and West in which the United States has as yet almost no part. I say "as yet," because US wheat merchants have been conferring in Ottawa with a Soviet trade delegation; the Czechs have informed Secretary Rusk of their interest in buying American wheat; and Washington is buzzing with the rumored desire of Moscow to purchase about a quarter of a billion dollars of our wheat.

The Canadian wheat transaction alone has a value four times greater than our total 1962 trade with the entire Soviet bloc. Even West Germany, while it scrupulously avoids doing or saying anything which might imply that there is an "East Germany," nevertheless manages to conduct over $200 million each of import and export trade with that nonexistent country. And while Adenauer has suggested that the US not sell wheat to the Russians, West German exports to the USSR were $200 million in 1962. West European exports to the Soviet bloc now total over $2 billion a year; ours run around $125 million.

Three years ago, President Kennedy's pre-inauguration task force on foreign economic policy – headed by the present Undersecretary of State, George Ball – underscored the need to reform US policies on East-West trade. Until the past few weeks, however, the Administration has shown little active interest in the matter, despite the persistence of high unemployment and the balance-of-payments deficit. The Canadian wheat sale, however, seems to have stirred things up a bit; a few Congressmen have spoken out against current restrictions and controls; the White House Conference on Export Expansion unexpectedly adopted a resolution calling for reexamination of present policies; Commerce Secretary Hodges made similar indications.

US restrictions are a major, though by no means the sole reason, for the tiny volume of trade between this country and the Soviet bloc. Two principal Acts of Congress provide the basis for these restrictions – the Export Control Act of 1949 and the Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act of 1951 (commonly known as the "Battle Act"). The first of these – administered by the Department of Commerce – establishes general authority for controlling exports for reasons of foreign policy or national security. The second – administered by the Department of State – embargoes the shipment of "war materials" including strategic goods to Soviet-bloc nations and forbids the US to supply military or economic assistance to nations not cooperating in such an embargo; it also provides for the regulation of certain other exports and forbids aid to any country not cooperating with these controls. Determination under this Act of the items to be embargoed or controlled is made by the State Department. The obligation to terminate aid – except in cases involving the shipment of "arms, ammunition, implements of war and atomic energy materials" – may be waived by the President. These two pieces of legislation go a lot further than simply forbidding US exporters to arm our "enemies." They grant extraordinary powers to control US exports and to blackmail our allies diplomatically to secure their cooperation in restricting exports to Communist nations.

On the basis of these two Acts, a complicated system has evolved under which all our exports – except those to Canada – are formally licensed. Of those going outside the Soviet bloc, some 85 to 90 percent are automatically authorized; of those going to Soviet-bloc nations – except Poland – only a handful are automatically authorized. (Because of the insignificance of these items Mikoyan has termed them the "Ex-Lax list.") Restrictions on trade with Yugoslavia, not considered a member of the Soviet bloc, are little different than those on trade with other Western nations. To secure international cooperation in controlling exports the United States works through an informal multilateral "Coordinating Committee" (COCOM) of 15 nations – most European members of NATO plus Japan and Canada.

In administering the very general provisions of the Export Control Act, the Commerce Department – which acts upon the advice of an interagency group including representatives from State, Defense and other interested agencies – is subject to conflicting pressures, by far the most powerful of which favor tight controls. In 1962, a Congressionally-initiated amendment to that Act made explicit the responsibility to deny export licenses for any items significantly contributing not only to the military potential but to the *economic* potential of the Soviet bloc, and which would thus be detrimental to the security and welfare of the United States. In in-

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terpreting this amendment, the Commerce Department has said that there is "a burden on anyone who would argue that there is no such detriment"; in addition to the numerous items available to the Soviet bloc from non-US sources, only those items of no military or economic significance are certain to receive a license for export – "unless there is some other reason to deny it." Since the Commerce Department for a number of years has controlled exports "strategic or critical to the military industrialization base of the Soviet bloc," the changes made last year in the Export Control Act only make more explicit what has in fact been past practice.

Until June, 1961, the export of subsidized agricultural commodities (*i.e.*, wheat) to Soviet-bloc countries had been administratively forbidden, and when, in that month, they were made eligible for approval when sold for dollars at world market prices on an item-by-item basis, Congress kicked up a storm and passed a statutory admonition against such exports. As a result, there have been virtually no shipments of US farm products to Communist countries – except Poland.

Diligent efforts are also made to control the flow of unpublished technical data from the US to the Soviet bloc. An example of this diligence is provided by a recent case in which Hydrocarbon Research, Incorporated, designed and built a $17 million oil-refining complex in Rumania – and then turned over to the Rumanians the process designs, plans and specifications for the project.

Wheat for the Russians

Secretary of Agriculture Freeman has indicated that in response to unofficial inquiries, sales by private American traders to the Soviet Union of about 150 million bushels of wheat will be approved. The transaction is expected to be popular with US farmers. The wheat would be priced at about $1.80 a bushel and sold for cash.

Three things are significant here. The first is that Mr. Khrushchev chooses to buy wheat from the US when he could get it elsewhere, at little difference in cost. Second, he chooses to use his scarce gold to buy food, so that the Russians might let out their belts another notch, rather than to buy industrial hardware. And third, the Soviet need to import a quantity of the grain that is equivalent to about a sixth of Russia's wheat output in 1962 – in a year, 1963, when the world crop will be the third largest ever recorded. Khrushchev's repeated references to the urgent need for installing irrigation systems in the Soviet wheat belt indicate short harvests in the semi-arid areas particularly – the "virgin lands" that were broken to the plow as the first item in his program of plenty when he rose to power 10 years ago.

One would think that the purchaser of such a complex might need these documents simply to make it work, but the Commerce Department charged that in making them available Hydrocarbon "seriously and negligently misconstrued the US export regulations which distinguish between 'published' and 'unpublished' technical data" and made it possible for the Rumanians to duplicate the project themselves. Hydrocarbon's defense was that it interpreted US export controls over unpublished data as applying only to "fundamental secret knowledge." Accordingly, it used in the Rumanian project certain technical details previously incorporated in a similar Hydrocarbon project in France, together with other US technology based on well-recognized engineering principles and technical literature. The Commerce Department found no merit to this defense and hit Hydrocarbon with stiff administrative penalties.

Adding to the restrictiveness of US export controls are the uncertainties, arbitrary decisions and delays which their administration inevitably entails. With the exception of items on the "Ex-Lax" list, and a few other basic items, neither American exporters nor Communist importers know in advance whether or not a particular item will be approved for shipment. There is a wide area of administrative discretion in licensing decisions; there must be detailed investigations and analysis, and long delays are not unusual. For example, in the third quarter of 1962, $47 million of applications for export licenses were acted upon after being held by the Department of Commerce for "substantial periods of time, while commodities and transactions involved were subjected to intensive technical scrutiny and top-level interdepartmental policy review." Most were rejected.

The classic instance of administrative red-tape is the Bryant ball-bearing-machines case which spanned the change-over in Administrations. In this case, Commerce first approved the export of these machines but reversed itself after the Pentagon objected. Later, after again determining that comparable machines were available from European sources, Commerce reaffirmed its earlier approval. By this time, however, Congressional interest had been aroused and eventually an export license was denied the firm.

In addition to controls on exports, the US also restricts trade with Communist nations by limiting credit. The 1934 Johnson Act, as amended, bars the provision of *private* credit to countries which are not members of the International Monetary Fund or World Bank, or are in default of their obligations to us. As this Act is currently interpreted it applies to all credit other than normal short-term (180-day) commercial credits. Since it is customary to finance exports through longer-term credits this makes it difficult for US firms to secure export orders in competition with European and Japanese producers even on items they are allowed to export.

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Imports from the Soviet bloc are also curtailed. In 1951, in the midst of the Korean crisis, Most Favored Nation treatment was denied to Communist nations. In 1962 the Congress directed the President to withdraw MFN treatment from both Yugoslavia and Poland as soon as practicable. But the President has not yet done so, and the White House has been working hard to reverse this legislation.

Manufacturers, aware of the uncertainties involved and the possibility of adverse criticism, hesitate to invest the time and effort needed for preliminary negotiations with Soviet-bloc countries. Moreover, the wide range of government services available to exporters to other areas is not available to exporters trafficking with Communists. An aura of disreputability surrounds trade with the Soviet bloc and, as in the case of *Machinery* magazine which refuses to accept Soviet subscriptions, some American businessmen are all too ready to go the law one better. Merchants who offer for sale Polish hams or Yugoslavia baskets have been subjected to picketing, vandalism and other abuses. In October, 1962, the International Longshoremen's Union adopted a policy of boycotting the handling of Russian cargoes in East and Gulf Coast ports. Hence, goods from the United States have had to go through Canadian ports on their way to the Soviet Union.

Congressional dissatisfaction over the cooperation we have received from our allies is chronic. In amending the Export Control Act last year Congress expressed this dissatisfaction by reasserting the need for improved cooperation. The trouble is that our aversion to East-West trade is not shared by our allies. COCOM, which has existed since January, 1950, has proved a satisfactory but not a tractable forum, as the hassle over the US proposal some months ago to embargo exports of wide-diameter oil pipe to the Soviet bloc showed. In 1954, COCOM instituted a general revision of the multilateral list of prohibited exports, largely in response to European insistence that these prohibitions have no immediate military significance. Another revision was made in 1958 and since that year annual reviews have kept the list "up-to-date." But the US has never shared the view of other COCOM members that the prohibited list be kept small, and we have been the only member to maintain our own unilateral set of controls.

The Battle Act provisions for terminating aid, which have never been invoked, have been useless. As Secretary Rusk told the House Select Committee on Export Controls in 1962: "Our interests and the interests of our allies are so much intertwined in so many ways . . . that it is very difficult for us to press a matter of this sort to the breaking point. . . . You would think that in some situations we would be in a position to put on very great pressure but that would be true only if we were willing to break up . . . the intimacy of the alliance." Indeed, the Battle Act has proved a positive handicap in responding to the rapid changes taking place within the Soviet bloc and in our delicate relations with underdeveloped countries who are quick to resent US infringement on their sovereignty. In his 1961 State of the Union Message, President Kennedy requested Congress to amend the act to permit aid to be given at Presidential discretion even to countries not complying with its provisions. The Senate went along, but not the House of Representatives.

Advantages of Bloc Trading

Controls on trade with the Soviet bloc cannot be defended on the ground that they weaken the military strength of a hostile alliance, for when bloc economies are damaged, it is the supply of butter, not the production of guns, which is reduced. And whatever we may think of the over-all efficiency of Communist economies, the lesson of Sputnik is that they have technically advanced and relatively self-sufficient military and paramilitary sectors. It is naïve to think that denying materials and equipment – or even industrial "secrets" – will hold back the further development of Communist military power.

But is it to our interest to hinder economic development within the Soviet bloc? No – because the essence of trade is that it is *mutually* beneficial. Though some observers have concluded that state traders are able to reap monopoly advantages from bargains struck with the private traders of the West, any perusal of bloc literature on this subject reveals serious concern with the opposite problem – that ignorance and unfamiliarity with market conditions makes bloc traders patsies for the canny capitalists of the West.

Those who argue for strict limitations on trade with Communist nations seem to think that we are living in a world where the US and its band of good guys confronts an implacable and hostile Soviet Union with its band of bad guys. But reality is more nearly one where two loosening alliances struggle to live together in something resembling peace, each maintaining some degree of solidarity and ideological unity, and each seeking to influence the world's uncommitted masses. In such a world, increasing our economic and military superiority over the Soviet bloc is only a very partial objective. As Professor Brzezinski pointed out in these pages several weeks ago, our primary goal in Eastern Europe must be to ensure continued progress toward democratic political and social reform. This progress is impeded by restricting economic progress within the bloc. For example, Rumania is now engaged in a profound policy dispute with the Soviet Union and other members of the Soviet bloc over intra-bloc trade and economic development and as a result is keenly inter-

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ested in expanding trade with the United States to further her industrialization efforts. But our hands are tied, no credits can be given, no assurances of increased trade can be made.

Much could be accomplished by more liberal administration of present laws, and Secretary Hodges' evident inclination in this direction is admirable. But the slate should be wiped clean by limiting export controls to items of direct military significance along the lines of the international COCOM list, by extending general license privileges to all other items and dismantling much, if not all, of the present elaborate control mechanism; by scrapping the Battle Act and restoring Most Favored Nation treatment to all imports from the Soviet bloc; by repeal of the Johnson Act and the removal of other ad hoc prohibitions on trade and aid – such as embargo on the export of surplus agricultural commodities. We should also be sending trade missions to Communist countries and encouraging more exchanges of consumer information and expanded programs of trade fairs and exhibits.

Such a program is desirable in its own right. It could also help remove some of the past obstacles to US trade with the Soviet bloc – such as settlement of Soviet Lend-Lease obligations. Moreover, it would quicken the possibility of securing Soviet-bloc cooperation in bringing the conduct of East-West trade under rules generally accepted for international commerce. As the final report of the Senate Commerce Committee on "The United States and World Trade" pointed out in 1961: "Failure of the United States to push for normalization of East-West trade has facilitated the extension of bloc trade throughout the world on the basis of barter and bilateralism." We profess to be concerned about the growing Soviet "economic offensive," but we maintain policies admirably designed to minimize our influence over how this offensive is met.

State trading nations present real problems in international trade, but these problems are not insuperable. Arrangements could be worked out to establish equitable ground rules for the conduct of East-West trade in a wide variety of areas including, for example, such things as provision for greater multilateralization, assurances that Soviet-bloc nations would import consumer as well as producer goods, agreement on the definition and prevention of "dumping," protection of patent and other proprietary rights, and provision for the impartial arbitration of commercial disputes. We aren't hurting the Communists, only ourselves, by our present policies. With few exceptions, they should be scrapped.

Why Bosch Fell

by Victor Alba

The September 25 overthrow of the Dominican Republic's first constitutional government in a generation was, to many people, unexpected – but it shouldn't have been. In each of my three visits to the island during President Juan Bosch's eight months in office, a *coup d'état* was in the making.

The Air Force, Trujillo's pet military group, would, it was assumed, lead the takeover. On one occasion Bosch, without giving in to the insurgents' demands, persuaded them to drop their plan – and then dismissed the lieutenant and Castroite priest behind it. The other two times, the Air Force officials abandoned their plot on learning that US warships were steaming toward Santo Domingo. (They had probably not forgotten that, on the fall of Trujillo, when the Air Force was about to stage a coup, it was the presence of US ships that encouraged the people to take to the streets and head it off. At that time the Dominicans, with neither political parties nor experience in the politics of an open society, were unprepared to do what they might have done then – but never again: disarm the army, which had been willing to submit to Trujillo's tyranny for 30 years but could not put up with eight months of a constitutional president's administration.)

It was not one branch of the armed services but all three, together with the police force, that finally carried out the coup. Its leader, at least for purposes of public consumption, was the Secretary of Defense, General Víctor Viñas Román, of whom Bosch once told me, "I believe he's loyal, wants stability in the country, and is an effective counterweight to the ambitions of his fellow officers."

The most highly regarded of the Dominicans exiled

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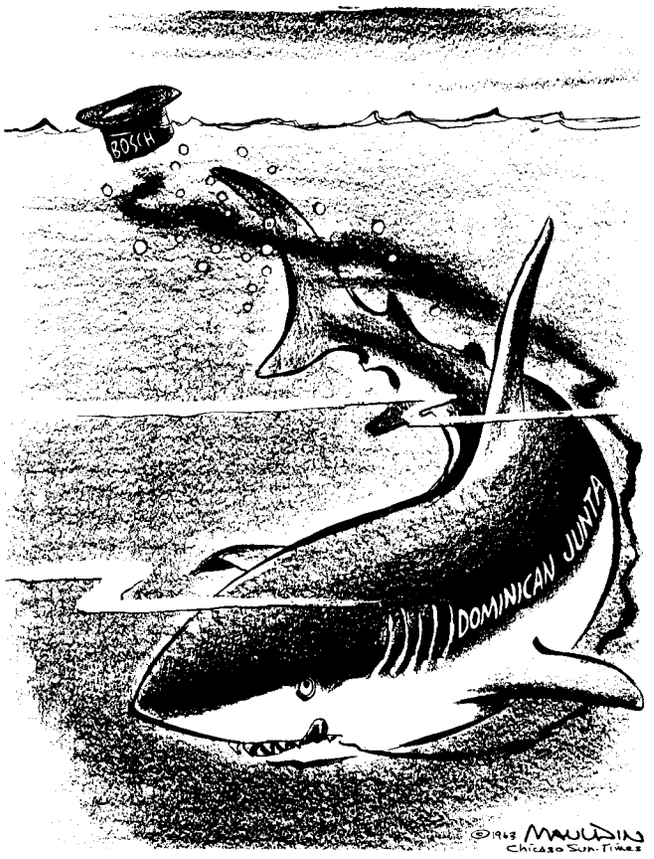
under Trujillo, Bosch was the only one to build up a political party and to hold on to his progressive, democratic beliefs. He and the members of his Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) were the first to return on the dictator's death, but rather than take part in the intrigues that developed around the Council of State, they set out to shape public opinion, to strengthen their party organization, and to teach the politically unaware Dominicans what a political party is. Throughout the campaign, Bosch was accused of being a reactionary, of having pocketed the exiles' funds (in all the years I have known him, he has lived modestly), and of being a Communist. Yet he won hands down, and PRD gained control of both houses in the legislature. In view of the fact that the elections were organized by the Council of State, which Bosch charged with fiscal irresponsibility, there can be no doubt as to the honesty of Bosch's victory.

"First-Class Citizen"

Yet, from the day he took office, the president was under attack. Not a series of attacks, but a single, coordinated, systematic attack. A leader of the opposition, who claimed to be of the left, told me a few hours after the inauguration, "Tomorrow I'll go after him." My "why?" was answered with, "You surely don't think we can have the masses governing us!"

He was right. PRD was the party of the worker, of the farmer, of the man in the street, not of the politician or of the intellectual. For the first time in the Dominican Republic the common people had a say in the government, while the ruling caste found itself out of power. Such a situation was intolerable.

Bosch's administration was not a spectacular success. When he took office the treasury was in the red, because, in order to win the people's support in the forthcoming elections, the Council of State that followed Trujillo had embarked on a lavish spending program that had to be paid for by its successor. Then there were the armed forces – armed but without the slightest regard for constitutional government. Then there was the Church, among other things resentful because a priest who had accused Bosch of being a Communist during the campaign had been made to look foolish in a television debate with the candidate. And there were 12 political parties besides PRD, only one of which, the National Civic Union, had a certain amount of strength but no experience, and all of which were determined to topple the government by a short cut; they were too impatient to build up a loyal opposition, to convince the voters of their views, and to wait for the next elections. Add to this the scurrilous attacks against the president, PRD's loss of dynamism since assuming power, and the lack of administrative training among many office



"What could I do? The poor guy was floundering around."

holders, and it is not hard to see why the government was not a model of efficiency. Yet it was planning broad national reforms – and thus assuring the military coup against it.

During the campaign Bosch had called for reforms in the Dominican society, which has been rigidly stratified. At the top are the "first-class citizens," as they call themselves, who have always been in control; descendants of Spaniards, and of "hidalgos of pure blood," they are the landholders and businessmen who speak disparagingly of "the niggers." The middle layer of Dominican society is made up of "second-class citizens," also descendants of Spaniards but not of the pure-blooded hidalgos; after taking part in the uprisings of a century of constant struggle, they are now gaining strength in the world of business and the liberal professions. At the bottom is the rest of the population – farmers, small shopkeepers, day laborers, and white-collar workers – the "third- to tenth-class citizens." There is neither communication nor mobility among the castes. (Trujillo was himself "second-class" and never able to become "first-class," but he was supported by the top caste because he served its ends.)

Among the other measures that Bosch advocated was one that touched on the vital issue of the disposition of

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the ex-dictator's property. He thought the State should, through autonomous agencies, administer the Trujillo family's property that the State had attached on the caudillo's death – holdings that make up at least 30 percent of the nation's economy. And, of course, he talked about agrarian reform.

Alongside the small properties in certain parts of the country, there have existed two kinds of large estates: those belonging to the Trujillos – modern and mechanized – and those belonging to a handful of large landowners who carved their estates and plantations out of public or abandoned property. (As recently as a few months ago, a lawyer and ex-presidential candidate under Trujillo was adding to his holdings by traveling around the country in a truck loaded with barbed wire and fencing in and labeling as "private property" all the unclaimed land he came across.)

The State owns 500,000 hectares of land, taken over from the Trujillos, who, in turn, had taken them from the State or from private owners, and large landowners have another 62,500 hectares. The "first-class" citizens naturally did not welcome the prospect of an agrarian reform, even though the lands to be distributed under Bosch's program were to be those that are unoccupied, belonging either to the State or not under cultivation; they were even less enthusiastic at being deprived of power for the first time in the country's history. Besides, they wanted to buy up Trujillo's property cheaply for themselves.

That the "first-class" citizens would favor the overthrow of Bosch at any cost was thus a foregone conclusion, and that they would win some military support, probable. The question was whether the government would be able, in time, to give new impetus to the PRD, to get the reforms under way to the point where they could not be rolled back, and to retain the support of the United States. Bosch's government had strong backing from Washington up to the end, but it failed in the other two objectives. It failed out of fear that if the masses were marshaled behind the PRD and Bosch, or if the reforms got a real start, the military would take over. It was a vicious circle.

The Stifled Opposition

The "first-class" citizens found a way of breaking the circle in their favor by spreading word that Bosch was a Communist. Nobody believed the story, because the president's record was clear. But he did refuse to outlaw three Communist groups, as he had been asked by the military and by the opposition (they had never made such a demand of Trujillo, when in 1946 and 1961 the dictator allowed the Communists freedom of action; one of Bosch's first acts, on assuming the presidency, had been to dismiss a number of Castroites whom the Council of State put in key positions).

Not a few US newspapermen, used to getting information from "first-class" Dominicans who, under Trujillo, were the only ones who could talk to them, believed their old informers and asserted that Bosch was indeed surrounded by Communists.

Why did Bosch refuse to go after the Communists and Castroites? First, he told me, because they were within the law; if they were outlawed, they would wage guerrilla warfare from the hills, and, in order to defeat them, the military would insist on a suspension of constitutional guarantees and, along with them, of the reforms. Second, because sharp divisions were arising among international Communism, Castroism and the Dominican Communists, and prosecuting the three local organizations (none of them very strong) would help unite the Communist movement.

Bosch never attempted to stop the vitriolic attacks against his policies, nor did he hold out favors to his opponents who were always ready to accept them. He declared no state of siege and jailed no one for political reasons. Yet every day the newspapers and radio stations, not a single one of them on Bosch's side, repeated the cry that "the government has stifled the voice of the opposition."

Bosch had faith – apparently too much – in the common sense of his countrymen and in the belief that even his enemies would see that he was acting in good faith. But it was precisely because they saw it, and realized that if the president remained in office a year or two the Dominican Republic would no longer be their private property, that the "first-class" citizens swayed a handful of priests and military officers to their side and turned them against the constitutional government.

What will be the consequences of Bosch's overthrow? For the country, disastrous. Democrats will lose faith in elected government as a means of carrying out reforms. The masses will be more impatient and more susceptible to demagogy. And when, some day, a constitutional regime is restored, things will be even worse than when Bosch took over. For the military has played into the hands of the very people it claims to be defeating (the same people who received favored treatment from the Council of State, when it was in power), giving them a chance to proclaim that social reform cannot be carried out gradually and democratically in Latin America but must be accomplished quickly and by force. The United States will also come in for criticism, even though this time it had nothing to do with the coup, and US policies in the Hemisphere will suffer another setback.

Much of the ground that Castro and Khrushchev lost in Latin America during the Cuban crisis of October, 1962, can now be regained, thanks to the intransigence of a few thousand Dominicans who are unwilling to stop living off three million of their countrymen.

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Dead End in Vietnam

I– *We Can't Win, But We Need Not Lose*

by Jerry A. Rose

Saigon

The war in South Vietnam cannot be won. That is now the on-the-spot opinion of numerous Vietnamese, American and other foreign experts. After four years of closely observing the situation, I concur. But it is unlikely that the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Maxwell Taylor, have reached a similar conclusion, though they have heard passionately contradictory viewpoints. There are powerful voices of optimism.

General Paul D. Harkins, Commander of the Military Assistance Command, is one such voice. To many of us long in the area, his voice is like a frightening echo of past American commanders. General "Hanging Sam" Williams considered President Ngo Dinh Diem a near-brother and felt that the Viet Cong guerrillas could be eliminated with tanks and howitzers – and while he was molding the Vietnamese troops into standard warfare units, guerrilla terrorism increased. But Williams chose to ignore that lethal increase. Then came General Lionel "Stonehead" McGarr who once told me that "President Diem is a genius, a genius." McGarr, to the day he left Vietnam because of "heart trouble," stoutly contended that the guerrillas were being contained. The opposite was true to any rational observer. Strangely, the tradition of rosy optimism dates back to French commanders during the Indochina War who saw a final victory forever around the corner until one day they turned the corner and ran smack into Dien Bien Phu.

"Vietnam has been the burial ground for more generals and diplomats than any other place on earth," said a laconic reporter the day Ambassador Frederick Nolting departed. And indeed it has, though more realism and less wishful thinking may have saved their own necks and the nation's. Lesser officials and the much-maligned correspondents have called the hard, unpleasant but realistic shots. To do so is not difficult; it takes but a recognition of the basic factors involved in Vietnam and in guerrilla warfare. And the most basic of these factors is the attitude of the people toward their government and national leader. But for some reason, diplomats, soldiers in the field, and politicians in Washington are unable to grasp the importance of the *people*. While forever raising wet fingers to the wind of public opinion in the US, the policy-makers appear to operate on the belief that Asian people have no opinions, and even if they did have an opinion, it would carry no weight. A good Gallup poll would easily disprove the former proposition, and history has proved time and again the fallacy of the latter.

During their week's stay in Vietnam, McNamara and Taylor got little if any inkling of Vietnamese public opinion and of its significance in the war effort. Rather, they have been evaluating the war largely through military statistics. Such statistics – when accurate – indicate trends but not solutions. The trend is: greater Viet Cong activity, increased casualties on both sides (with the government suffering generally fewer), and the crucial ratio of weapons lost and gained favoring the enemy by at least two to one. A recent tabulation within one week showed the guerrillas to have captured 360 weapons from the government while losing only 150 to the national forces. These figures tell a clear story: the Viet Cong are winning the ground battles, though they incur heavy casualties from government airstrikes. Thus, with a steady flow of weapons from within South Vietnam – and an increasing stream of Communist-bloc weapons being smuggled to the guerrillas from the outside – it is not surprising that the hard-core Viet Cong force has jumped by an estimated 8,000 men in the last several months. There are now some 31,000 Communist guerrillas, well above last year's figure of 20,000-25,000.

Nevertheless, $1.5 million a day and about 17,000 active US military men has had some positive effect. The keynote strategic hamlet plan to "urbanize" and control the population goes well north of Saigon. As of September 8,227 strategic hamlets have been built, encompassing 76 percent of the population or 9.6 million people. In coastal provinces such as Quang Ngai, once

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a Viet Cong stronghold, the "hamletization" coupled with sound agricultural projects (small dams for irrigation, tons of fertilizer and pesticides) has gone far to winning back the support of the people. And here, notable military victories have been won – for it only takes one government-oriented peasant to inform on the movements of the Viet Cong, one peasant *actively* supporting the government. With solid information, the military can prepare itself. Just recently the government caught the guerrillas by surprise and gained a decisive battle because one old lady came in to report the Viet Cong's position.

"We're Lucky To Hold Our Own"

Incredible though it is, that one active individual is lacking in most areas of the Mekong Delta, the economic heart of South Vietnam. Americans working with the strategic hamlet plan in the Delta readily admit that "the program is floundering," "has made little progress." Militarily, the situation is equally unsatisfactory. Commented an American general: "Below the Bassac River, we're lucky to hold our own." Many feel that we are not even doing that.

This economic heart of South Vietnam, the Mekong Delta, has suffered severe strokes over the last several years. In 1961, rice exports from the area – Vietnam's major export product – were totally suspended. The exports began to diminish in 1962. Now, they have again been halted. Despite the vast American aid, the government is finding itself short of cash. For example, this year the strategic hamlet program was calculated to cost about $30 million. The US was to pay the first six months (to the end of June), the Vietnamese the latter half of the year. As of September, the Diem government had not yet started to fulfill its part of the agreement. From July of 1962 to July of this year, Vietnam's foreign and gold reserves fell from $200 million to $130 million. The national bank is reported to have a piaster reserve of only $14 million. And Vietnam's debts to foreign banks amount to some $140 million (which is one reason why hard-headed Hong Kong businessmen decided to cease trading with the country).

"Right now, our greatest danger," said a Vietnamese economist, "is national bankruptcy and wild inflation."

Part of this economic condition is due directly to President Diem. He will not listen to the counsel of his own trained economists.

Similarly, President Diem refused to listen to reasoning voices of moderation when the Buddhist trouble erupted. He took brother Nhu's advice and cracked down harshly. He has echoed his sister-in-law, the now infamous Madame Nhu, in calling the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk "a murder." Then the Vietnamese students began to riot, and over 8,000 teenagers, both girls and boys, were imprisoned. Ministers of the State, civil officials, Army officers went to the prisons with packages of clothing and food for their sons and daughters. Throughout the country, the word of these events – both with the Buddhists and the students – slowly seeps down. (*Slowly* seeps down, for news does not travel quickly.) Slowly seeps down and takes seed in the minds of the Vietnamese people, who are perhaps the most politically-sophisticated people in Asia – for they have suffered the wars of politics for more than 20 years. They have listened to many political ideologies. They have learned to choose cautiously, but they have also learned that to survive they must, sooner or later, choose a side. The repression against the students and the Buddhists will inevitably affect their choice – for they are no different from any other peoples in the world. They do not like to see their religious leaders or their young people persecuted.

Yet, almost unbelievably, some US officials maintain that the Buddhist and student demonstrations have not affected and will not affect the people and the "way the war is going." It has been said many times now, by US Army officers, by disinterested observers, by journalists, by Communist guerrilla leaders themselves that "a guerrilla war cannot be won by military means alone," that "the people are the key to victory." It has been said so many times that the statement has become cliché. It is true nevertheless – except I believe that the roots of rancor now run so deep in South Vietnam that the people can no longer be won over, at least not enough of them to result in clear-cut stability

"Outside of a miracle, a genius – like Magsaysay – coming to the fore," said one American in Saigon who has dedicated all his energies over the last three years to South Vietnam, "this country is lost!" Then, rather wearily, he murmured: "Leadership, leadership. . . ." Even as late as last year, popular leadership may have spelled the difference. Today, the grass-root strength of the Viet Cong appears so strong, particularly in the Delta, that it seems unlikely any leader could shake it.

On top of this a few hard-headed observers contend that the war could never have been won. Said one Australian diplomat: "We must clearly define what we mean by 'winning' the war. An outright victory is impossible. Stability as existed in 1957 might still be achieved – but as then, there will always be terrorism." While acknowledging the need of sound and popular leadership to gain that 1957 stability, this gentleman points to South Vietnam's long, gaping borders: a border with Cambodia, another with Laos, a third with North Vietnam. "Porous borders," he calls them – they could never be sealed off; they would always permit a shower of infiltrators, terrorists. Thus: "In that sense, the war cannot be won. Peace cannot be established."

According to good estimates, last year infiltration into

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South Vietnam ran in the neighborhood of 1,000 men per month. This year it fell off for awhile to almost nothing, now it is back to around 500 per month. But the shocking factor is not the actual number of infiltrators but the *capacity* for infiltration. An intelligence expert told me bluntly: "If North Vietnam wanted to, they could send down 20,000 infiltrators in one swoop and it would be two weeks before we knew it."

Now let us review briefly the current situation in South Vietnam: (1) a national leader who is unpopular and whose family is detested; (2) a nation of discontented people, two segments of which (Buddhists and students) have overtly demonstrated their unhappiness, another segment which covertly demonstrates its unhappiness (by siding with the Viet Cong), a final segment which remains for the time being passive (popular passivity helps the Viet Cong – for the government needs active informers); (3) a shaky, inflationary economy; (4) a war that grows fiercer each week despite vast American aid in both money, materiel and personnel; and (5) "porous borders" with three countries that permit a steady influx of guerrillas.

Take these five elements, place them against the stated American policy in South Vietnam: "To win and get out," and it should be starkly clear that the US is at a dead end. We cannot win.

But we do not necessarily have to lose. That is, though an outright victory over the guerrillas now seems impossible (and I believe that despite the borders it was once possible), an outright defeat can still be prevented. But US thinking must undergo some radical changes. Washington must begin to consider the proposition that peace to South Vietnam will come not on the battlefield but only at the conference table. And I do not mean General de Gaulle's conference table. Within the forseeable future, reunification of the North and the South could only result in a final Communist victory. But there are other possibilities. To understand them, one must be aware of the difficult position of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam.

An Asian Yugoslavia?

In the slow-seething years before Red China and the Soviet Union split totally asunder, North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh tried to play the neutral moderator. He preferred the Russians, but the proximity of China did not permit him to take sides. He knew that to become an oriental Albania was to risk eventual destruction. Now, since the split, Ho has, by necessity, leaned more toward China. But the Chinese ruled Vietnam for almost 2,000 years, and China has never ceased to look hungrily at Vietnam's rice bowl, the Mekong Delta. In fact, it is the Mekong Delta which the North itself wants, and *needs*, to achieve a solid economy (the North has always been industrial, the South agricultural). All Vietnamese have a natural dislike, suspicion and fear of the Chinese, and it is highly probably that Ho Chi Minh and the other Communist leaders of the North would do much to disengage themselves from China's sphere of influence. They could do this if they were able to trade for food with South Vietnam and for material with the West. And they likely would be willing to enter into trade relations, cease hostilities – become a sort of Asian Yugoslavia – providing they were convinced an outright victory could not be gained in the South within a reasonable length of time. The US must convince the North it cannot win soon or easily.

This could be done if President Diem were removed, a better leader emerged, popular support gained to some degree, the morale and efficiency of the Vietnamese Army improved. As Diem obviously is not easily removed, alternatives must be examined. One alternative is to put a division or more of American combat troops into action. Coupled with this direct involvement would be the establishment of a dual chain of US-Vietnamese Army commands that ignored and by-passed the president. We could continue to finance the Vietnamese

CIA's "Thirst for Power"

In a scathing dispatch from Saigon dated October 2, Richard Starnes of Scripps-Howard reported that on two occasions the CIA in Vietnam "flatly refused to carry out instructions from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge." In one instance, "the CIA frustrated a plan of action Mr. Lodge brought with him from Washington, because the agency disagreed with it." Mr. Starnes also said that:

► *". . . CIA 'spooks' (a universal term for secret agents here) have penetrated every branch of the American community in Saigon. . . . Few people other than John Richardson [Chief of the CIA apparatus in Veitnam] and his close aides know the actual CIA strength here, but a widely used figure is 600."*

► *"For every State Department aide here who will tell you 'Dammit, the CIA is supposed to gather information, not make policy, but policy-making is what they're doing here,' there are military officers who scream over the way the spooks dabble in military operations."*

► *"One very high American official here, a man who has spent much of his life in the service of democracy, likened the CIA's growth to a malignancy, and added he was not sure even the White House could control it any longer."*

The story of the CIA in South Vietnam, said Mr. Starnes, "is a dismal chronicle of bureaucratic arrogance, obstinate disregard of orders, and unrestrained thirst for power."

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Army, but through non-governmental channels. We could also cut back on our budgetary support.

North Vietnam's response to this challenge could only be to heavily step up infiltration with large units of soldiers. The moment it does, three important changes occur in the nature of the war: (1) North Vietnam will begin to suffer the financial burden of war, a burden which it can ill afford; (2) sooner or later one of these infiltrating units will be captured and North Vietnam will be inextricably caught in the act of aggression; and (3) with definite proof of aggression, North Vietnam will leave itself open to direct retaliation, as through bombing attacks. At such a point, would the war escalate?

The North Vietnamese do not want to be devastated, nor are they prepared to finance a war the size of the Korean conflict. Neither is Red China in any financial position to engage on a lengthy battlefield. The Soviet Union not only has been detaching itself from this part of the world, but also seems to wish peace as much as the US. The conference table stands ready. The contract for peace is comparatively simple: trade relations in exchange for non-aggression.

To sum up: one solution now for the US appears to be a show of power in South Vietnam which would pave the way toward a compromising settlement. But is the risk of a power-play warranted? Southeast Asia has been likened to a "set of dominoes." If South Vietnam falls, the rest of the blocks go too. It would seem, therefore, that it is in the high interest of the US, as a leader and a system of government, to risk much in stabilizing that tottering block.

II—*Negotiating with the North*

by Ho Thong Minh

When he returned to Vietnam in June, 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem asked me to work with him. I resigned as Minister of National Defense on April 29, 1955, end of a brief nine-month period during which, as a result of the Geneva agreements, peace was temporarily restored. After 16 years of war, it did not seem to me that South Vietnam could continue moving toward its own reconstruction in a spirit of unity and harmony. All hope of positive advance had been made impossible by the nefarious activities of the Ngo clan.

At present South Vietnam has a population of 14 million (as many as the former Belgian Congo). Inside the nation a façade of republicanism conceals the sordid realities: corruption, informer tactics, stagnation, the denial of all democracy. It is a dismal and telling contrast to recall that under Syngman Rhee in South Korea there were some 90-odd opposition deputies in office at Seoul, whereas Diem refuses to tolerate a single one at Saigon! The Diem regime claims to be anti-Communist, but its thinking and its actions are patterned after the "psychological warfare" of the French "colonels." It has successively gotten rid of Bao-Dai, of the various religious sects, of the French, of all domestic opposition, of the Buddhists, of the Vietnamese people themselves – and now, finally, it is in difficulty with the Americans.

The amount of US aid to South Vietnam (and hence to the Ngo clan) is comparable to the contribution which France was making not so long ago to Algeria. Between direct military and economic aid and its own expenses for maintaining US troops in Vietnam, the United States pours annually into the yawning South Vietnamese pit the sum of $700 million. This expenditure enables the US to equip an army of over half a million Vietnamese (510,000, to be precise) on territory only half the size of the area where, in 1954, the French and Vietnamese together mustered only 450,000 men. All that money and military manpower – only to be held at bay by 50 Viet Cong battalions all told!

The whole world has become aware of the drama which is being enacted in South Vietnam, and the Diem regime is as sharply criticized abroad as at home. How is the impasse to be got around? Although the people of South Vietnam are resolutely committed to a program of defiance and insurrection, they aspire beyond this to surviving as a free and independent nation. They are certain that the Ngo regime must end and are already looking forward to the prospect of peace. But by what road is this peace to be achieved?

Ho Thong Minh, *a 43-year-old civil engineer, now lives in Paris where he is the moving spirit behind the group* Pour Le Vietnam. *His comments were first published in* Le Monde *of September 19.*

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The current situation renders imperative (first of all) the overthrow of the Diem regime; for this the Vietnamese Army will be the ineluctable instrument, and in this connection, the Americans are increasing their efforts to dissociate the army from the present government at Saigon. Next should come the cessation of foreign intervention – in other words, both the Americans and the "infiltrators" from the North should depart. This, of course, can only be done by a truce, a suspension of hostilities, with the Viet Cong. Thirdly, after the foreign bases have been eliminated, it will be necessary to have solid international guarantees so as to make the present SEATO troops unnecessary.

If these three steps could be taken, it would then at last be possible for the two Vietnams to sit down together and settle their problems. Of course national reunification continues to be the ultimate goal of the Vietnamese. But for the time being political realities require compromise solutions. Everyone knows that North Vietnam is directed by a Communist regime which seeks to maintain an attitude of neutrality as between Peking and Moscow. Under these circumstances and for the immediate present, the next South Vietnamese government can hardly be anything but *non*-Communist. In fact, if it were *anti*-Communist, practically nothing would be changed and there would be a danger of the country being swallowed up in Diemism without Diem. If, on the other hand, the new regime were to welcome Communists in the government, it could no longer speak as equal to equal in independent conversations with the North. Furthermore, one need look only as far as Laos to find an example of the very great difficulties which could rapidly become insurmountable if the Vietnamese government were to be a three-headed coalition – and the example is still more compelling when one considers that Laos is all one country, not cut in two pieces like Vietnam. A future non-Communist regime in Saigon could, however, where domestic problems are concerned, invite the participation of all Vietnamese patriots, from the Buddhist clergy to the National Liberation Front, provided they are not Communists.

In the international sphere, such a regime could contribute to peace in Southeast Asia by adopting the same neutralist attitudes as those of its neighbor, Cambodia. It would certainly not oppose the diplomatic recognition of North Vietnam by France. In this way, France would fulfill a privileged role – providing a connecting link for economic unity and, most particularly, for cultural unity, the lines of which would be laid down between the two Vietnams in their efforts to establish the united and independent Vietnam which General de Gaulle has recently and rightly envisaged.

There remains the crucial problem of the confrontation between China and the West in Southeast Asia. Here it is possible to believe that the present conflict between Peking and Moscow has been brought about less by ideological differences than by differences in the level of economic development. When China attains the level of economic development that now prevails in the USSR, it too will surely feel that it must protect the progress it has made by practicing peaceful coexistence.

In any event, things being as they are, the foregoing program and prospects are those which seem to me within the realm of the possible.

III–*A Talk with Ho Chi Minh*

by Bernard B. Fall

As the Second Indochina War now grinds on into its fourth year, a large-scale reappraisal is under way both among Americans in Saigon and in Washington as to the ultimate objectives and outcome of that war. For the time being, no solution envisaged considers seriously the possibility of talks with the real "enemy-by-proxy," North Vietnam. In fact, it is not without significance that the *only* open reference made to such negotiations came from no one else but South Vietnam's secret police chief, Ngo Dinh Nhu, in his recent interview with an American columnist. Nhu, beyond a doubt seeks to use at least the threat – if not the reality – of such South-North contacts as a counter-blackmail against the United States which has thus far (and with conspicuous unsuccess) sought his and his wife's removal from Vietnamese politics.

Thus, negotiating with North Vietnam – or, for that matter, any kind of contact with that country – has become another bogey that, in the months to come, may supplant Cuba and even Red China in the public eye. Of course, as even a brief stay in North Vietnam shows, that attitude cuts both ways: in Hanoi, the only kind

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of demonstration that is allowed is directed against the United States, the Ngo family, or, on occasion, against the Indian and Canadian (not the Polish, of course) members of the lame-duck International Control Commission which still "supervises" the implementation of the civil liberties and disarmament provisions of the 1954 Indochina cease-fire. The Commission's lack of effectiveness makes it a permanent monument to the impossibility of settling a dispute when it directly involves the prestige or interests of both of the major power blocs.

French non-Communist writers have been able, over the years, to visit North Vietnam, just as Canadian, Australian and British writers have been able to visit Red China. In my own case, the fact that I had written a solidly-documented (and, hence, unflattering) book in France about North Vietnam, perhaps incited the North Vietnamese leaders to be franker than usual. What follows is based on notes taken in the course of a conversation which took place in July, 1962, supplemented by a tape recording made during that conversation and by notes made immediately afterwards, while my memory was fresh. It is a verbatim translation from the original French, and leaves out only some of the usual banter.

A brief note on the North Vietnamese leaders involved: *Prime Minister Pham Van Dong*, born in 1906 in Central Vietnam, is of senior mandarin origin; in fact, say some, he outranks President Ngo Dinh Diem. While Diem's father was chief of cabinet to emperor Thanh-Thai, Dong's father held the same post under emperor Duy-Tan. A graduate of Chiang Kai-shek's own Whampoa Military Academy (class of 1925). Dong has been Ho's prime minister and probably closest associate since 1955.

Ho Chi Minh, born in 1890 in Central Vietnam, was a revolutionary since his age of 14, went to Europe in 1911, became a co-founder of the French Communist Party in 1920 and a French delegate to the Komintern in 1923. He founded the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930 and became President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) on September 2, 1945. He unquestionably is the most important Asian Communist leader after Mao Tse-tung, and the last of the Old Bolsheviks in power anywhere in the Communist world.

All remarks made by Dong are preceded by "P"; those made by Ho by "H," and those made by myself by "F." My own explanations are placed in brackets.

[Pham Van Dong meets me in the corridor of the presidential residence; wears a khaki Mao Tse-tung suit; invites me to a sitting room overlooking the formal gardens.]

P: Please make yourself at home, Monsieur le Professeur, take off your jacket [takes off his own jacket]. I know how it is here during the rainy season. I hope you are enjoying your trip throughout North Vietnam, and that you find us cooperative.

F: Thank you, Monsieur le Prime Minister, your subordinates indeed have generally been cooperative.

P: I remember, however, that you said in your book *Le Viet-Minh* that we are not a democratic country. Do you still feel the same way about this?

F: Well, Monsieur le Prime Minister, all my color films were impounded upon my arrival at Hanoi Airport. I don't think you would call this in accordance with democratic procedures . . .

P: [laughing] Oh, those are general rules which apply to everybody. [While theoretically true, the rule obviously applies to Westerners only. In addition, all black-and-white film has to be exposed prior to departure and the developed film submitted to the Foreign Ministry for censorship. Even so, the airport police again inspected my films prior to departure.]

F: Monsieur le Prime Minister, North Vietnam has had some serious economic difficulties. Do you believe that they have been mastered?

P: As you know, the recent 7th plenary session of the [Vietnamese] Communist Party's Central Committee has decided to give priority to basic heavy industries, although attention will be paid to a proper balance with agriculture and consumer goods production.

We base ourselves upon the Marxist economic viewpoint: heavy industrial development is essential to Socialist construction, but we also understand the importance of the "full belly." In any case, we do not seek to bluff and will not put emphasis on "showpiece" industries but on sound and useful economic development.

Yes, we have made economic mistakes, due mainly to our backwardness and ignorance in the field of economic planning. Not all of those errors have yet been corrected and some of their effects are still felt, but we try to overcome them rapidly thanks to help from friendly countries.

F: Monsieur le Prime Minister, President Ho Chi Minh made a declaration to the *Daily Express* [London] in March, 1962, referring to the conditions under which North Vietnam would negotiate a settlement with the South. Has anything happened in the meantime which would change those conditions?

P: Our position has remained largely unchanged since President Ho Chi Minh's declaration. What has changed, however, is the extent of American intervention in South Vietnam, which has continued to increase and to take over increased responsibilities and control over the [Ngo Dinh] Diem regime.

The real enemy is American intervention. It is of little importance as to who the American agent in Vietnam might be.

F: Monsieur le Prime Minister, the International Control Commission [composed of Indian, Polish and

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Canadian members] has recently accused the North Vietnamese Republic of aiding and abetting the South Vietnamese rebellion. What do you think of that accusation?

P: [deprecating gesture] We understand, Monsieur le Professeur, under which outside pressures the [Indian and Canadian] members of the ICC labor. After all, India does depend for development upon large-scale American aid.

F: But would it not at least be conceivable that some of the almost 100,000 South Vietnamese who went north [of the 17th Parallel] in 1954 and whose relatives are now fighting against South Vietnamese forces, would attempt to slip across your border back into South Vietnam in order to help their relatives – even without the permission of the North Vietnamese government? Wouldn't that be at least conceivable?

P: Monsieur, in our country one does not cross borders without permission.

F: Would not a spreading of the guerrilla war entail a real risk of American reaction against North Vietnamese territory? You have been to North Korea last year, Monsieur le Prime Minister; you saw what American bombers can do. . . .

P: [very seriously] We fully realize that the American imperialists wish to provoke a situation in the course of which they could use the heroic struggle of the South Vietnamese people as a pretext for the destruction of our economic and cultural achievements.

We shall offer them no pretext which could give rise to an American military intervention against North Vietnam.

[Ho Chi Minh suddenly enters, unannounced. Mao Tse-tung suit in suntan cotton. Spry and tanned looking, springy step, arms swinging, firm handshake.]

F: I thought you were in Moscow on vacation!

H: You see, people say a lot of things that aren't true. [Looks at my jacket, tape recorder, book, next to me on sofa.] My, you have got a lot of things with you.

F: I am sorry, Monsieur le Président [Push things together. Ho sits down next to me, humorous gleam on face, slaps me on thigh.]

H: So, you are the young man who is so much interested in all the small details about my life. [In my book *Le Viet-Minh* and the forthcoming *Two Viet-Nams*, I have attempted to include as complete a biographical sketch of Ho Chi Minh as possible. During my stay in Hanoi, I also interviewed many of Ho's old friends on Ho's life, and he apparently had been informed of this.]

F: Monsieur le Président, you are after all a public figure, and it certainly would not be a violation of a military secret to know whether you had a family, or were in Russia at a given date.

H: Ah, but you know, I'm an old man, a very old man [he's 73]. An old man likes to have a little air of mystery about himself. I like to hold on to my little mysteries. I'm sure you will understand that.

F: But. . . .

H: Wait until I'm dead. [In spite of this, I received just before I left Hanoi a letter containing six manuscript pages of details about Ho's life, filling in most of the gaps – no doubt on his own orders.]

P: Monsieur Fall brought you a book on the Indochina War which contains a drawing of you by his wife.

H: [with an old man's impatience] Where? Where? Let me see it. Providing she's got my goatee right. Providing the goatee looks alright. [Unwraps and looks.] Mmm – yes, that is very good. That looks very much like me. [Looks around, grabs a small flower bouquet from the table, hands it to me.] Tell her from me that the drawing is very good and give her the bouquet and kiss her on both cheeks for me.

P: Monsieur Fall is interested in the present situation in South Vietnam. . . .

F: Yes, Monsieur le Président, how do you evaluate the situation in South Vietnam?

H: Monsieur Ngo Dinh Diem is in a very difficult position right now and it is not likely to improve in the future. He has no popular support.

F: But would you negotiate with South Vietnam?

P: The situation is not yet ripe for a real negotiation. They [South Vietnamese] don't really want to negotiate.

H: That is absolutely true. They are showing no intention to negotiate.

F: But are you not afraid that the situation might degenerate into a protracted war?

H: [earnestly, turning full face] Monsieur le Professeur, you have studied us for 10 years, you have written about the Indochina War. It took us eight years of bitter fighting to defeat you French in Indochina. Now the Diem regime is well armed and helped by many Americans. The Americans are stronger than the French. It might perhaps take 10 years, but our heroic compatriots in the South will defeat them in the end. We shall marshal world public opinion about this unjust war against the South Vietnamese people.

P: Yes, the heroic South Vietnamese people will have to continue the struggle by its own means but we watch its efforts with the greatest sympathy.

H: I think the Americans greatly underestimate the determination of the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese people has always shown great determination when it was faced with an invader.

F: But are you still willing to come to a negotiated settlement if the occasion presented itself?

H: Yes, but only with people who are willing to sit down with us at one and the same table and "talk."

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[French word: "causer" which means: "negotiate in good faith."]

F: You mean you would negotiate with any South Vietnamese government?

H: Yes, with any.

F: But what kind of relations would you envisage?

H: Of whatever type they [South Vietnamese] wish. After all, the East and West Germans have flourishing trade relations in spite of the Berlin Wall, haven't they? [After some further amenities, Ho leaves.]

F: Monsieur le Prime Minister, what do you think of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem's personal position as of right now?

P: It is quite difficult. He is unpopular, and the more unpopular he is, the more American aid he will need to remain in power. And the more American aid he gets, the more as an American puppet he'll look and the less likely is he to regain popularity.

F: That sounds pretty much like a vicious circle, doesn't it?

P: [humorous gleam] No, Monsieur le Professeur. It is a descending spiral.

F: But you must understand, Monsieur le Prime Minister, that South Vietnam is in a different situation than the non-Communist parts of Germany and Korea. In the latter two cases, the non-Communist part is by far the more populated, whereas in the case of Vietnam, the non-Communist part has 13.8 million people against your 17 million. You can clearly see that they have good reasons to fear North Vietnam which also has the larger army, and one with a fearsome reputation, as we French well know.

P: Certainly, we realize that we are in the stronger position. Thus, we are also willing to give all the guarantees necessary for the South to be able to come out fairly [*pour que le Sud trouve son compte*] in such a negotiation.

You will recall President Ho's declaration with regard to maintaining the South's separate government and economic system. The Fatherland Front embodies those points in its program, and the South Vietnamese Liberation Front likewise.

We do not envisage an immediate reunification and are willing to accept the verdict of the South Vietnamese people with regard to the institutions and policies of its part of the country.

F: What, then, would be the minimal conditions under which the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [North Vietnam] would accept a settlement of the conflict which at present exists in South Vietnam?

P: [Makes a statement as below.]

F: Would you object to my making a tape recording of that answer? It is a reply that I would like to have verbatim, if possible.

P: [Thinks it over, makes notes, agrees.]

P: This is a very timely question: The DRVN [North Vietnam] government has made some sufficiently explicit declarations on the subject [but] let me underline what follows: The underlying origin and immediate cause of the extremely dangerous situation in the South of our country is the armed intervention of the USA and the fascist dictatorship of Monsieur Ngo Dinh Diem, the creation and instrument of that [American] intervention.

It is obvious, then, that in order to normalize the situation in our whole country, those factors of dissension must disappear. We support with determination the patriotic struggle of our Southern compatriots and the objectives of their struggle – I mean, the program of the Southern Liberation Front.

We are certain that the massive help of all classes of South [Vietnam's] society and the active support of the peoples of the world, shall determine the happy outcome of the situation full of dangers which exist in the South of our country.

The people of Vietnam and the DRVN government remain faithful to the Geneva accords [of July, 1954] which establish our basic national rights. We shall continue to cooperate with the International Control Commission on the basis of those accords, and hope that this cooperation shall be fruitful – providing that all members of the Commission respect the accords.

F: Thank you, Monsieur le Prime Minister, for that statement.

P: I would like to say something about a remark you made in your book on our Republic about our alleged "isolationism" from neutral and pro-Western countries, and from international organizations. No, no and no, we are not isolationists! On the contrary, we seek "open windows" towards any country or organization that will deal with us on a matter-of-fact basis. We are willing to trade with them and make purchases from them.

F: What would be the position of the foreign community in South Vietnam, if the war worsens? There are still 15,000 French citizens living there.

P: As you know, the Southern Liberation Front has repeatedly shown that it does not wish to hurt the legitimate interests of the Europeans who live in South Vietnam. We make a distinction between France's position and that of American imperialists.

F: What is the attitude of the DRVN towards Laos and Cambodia?

P: We shall respect the Laos accords [This was stated briefly after the signature of the 1962 Geneva accords on Laos. It has become obvious since then that North Vietnamese troops still operate in Laos to some extent, or travel through South Vietnam.], and shall at all costs maintain good relations with Cambodia.

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How Poor Are American Negroes?

by Eli Ginzberg

The paucity of factual information about the changing circumstances and conditions of the Negro minority is a grievous handicap to both white and Negro leadership, and for that reason we are all indebted to the Southern Regional Council, that redoubtable organization which has contributed so much to the improvement of race relations in the South and in the nation,

The Economic Status of Negroes: In the Nation and in the South
by Vivian W. Henderson
(Southern Regional Council;
5 Forsyth St. N.W., Atlanta, Georgia)

for sponsoring a statistical study on *The Economic Status of Negroes: In the Nation and in the South*. Written by Vivian W. Henderson, Professor of Economics and Business Administration at Fisk University, the Council's latest brochure sheds much useful light on recent trends in the employment and income of Negroes compared to that of white neighbors, North as well as South.

With respect to population shifts, Professor Henderson points out that during the past decade every one of the Southern states except Florida lost more population through migration than it gained. (This ignores Virginia's increase because of the growth of the District of Columbia.) Moreover, except for Kentucky, the ratio of outmigration of the Negroes was considerably above that of the white population. Between 1940 and 1960 three million Negroes left the South; in 1940 more than three out of four of all American Negroes were residents of the South; today that figure is one in two. Moreover, these two decades witnessed a marked redistribution of the Negro population within the South. Southern Negroes are now primarily urban dwellers (72 percent), heavily concentrated in the central cities of the South (about half).

Have these movements helped or handicapped the Negro? Henderson points out that people move in response to economic opportunity. Therefore, such heavy migration within the region suggests that the Negro made a gain by shifting off the farm into the city; and such heavy migration out of the region suggests that he made a gain by going North.

Did it help the South? Henderson is uncertain. He points to the heavy costs sustained by the region in raising so many young people, Negro and white, only to lose them once they reached working age. But he does not face up to the chronic oversupply of labor in the South. Nor does he mention the continuing very high birth rate among the Southern farm population. He likewise ignores the advantage that many conservative Southerners see in the heavy out-migration of Negroes, which not only helps to drain the South of its surplus workers, but also forces North and West to confront the Negro en masse, thereby transforming a regional into a national problem. Finally, Henderson is silent about the substantial numbers of white and Negro men and women who live neither on the farm nor in cities but in small communities where there is little work and little prospect of work.

It is difficult to see how the South could gain in the near future by holding on to all of its population. The

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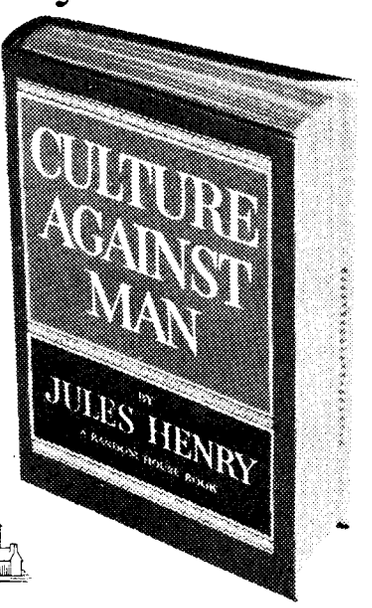

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South surely would gain if it could hold on to more of the better educated and more skilled among both Negroes and whites, but its economic progress requires a dampening of the increase among its farm population and continued out-migration.

The main purpose of Mr. Henderson's study is to assess recent trends in the relative incomes of Negroes and whites in the South and in the rest of the nation. Such titles and subtitles as "Negro Gain Has Been Slight"; "Negroes Running Fast to Stand Still"; "Southern Negroes at the Bottom of the Economic Ladder"; indicate his conclusions. He also tells us of the large gains in average income made by the Negro over the past two decades – from under $500 to over $3,000; and of the better ratio between his earnings and those of the white population – from 37 percent in 1940 to 56 percent in 1960. Big differences, both absolute and relative, continue to persist, but these are not the heart of the author's concern. He is more deeply disturbed, as have been others before him, that *"Negroes made their greatest income gains between 1940 and 1954. Since 1954 they have not progressed in income. . . ."* To this he adds an analysis based on the dollar gap which "means very simply that earnings are increasing for whites at a faster pace than for Negroes."

Surely the reduction in the rates of growth in Negro income, absolute and relative, since the end of the Korean War, is cause for concern. But a "dollar gap" analysis, especially since it is uncorrected for inflationary trends, is confusing rather than illuminating. It ignores such basic facts as whether the Negro has more money to spend now than formerly. (Henderson himself tells us that in ten large Southern cities alone, Negroes spent about $2 billion in 1961.) In any case, the concept of a dollar gap is useful only when it is juxtaposed to minimum or desirable budgets. Moreover, a sophisticated analysis would have to estimate the changing value of goods and services that Negroes receive free or below cost – housing, health services, education. Access to improved public services has been a major contribution to raising the real standard of living of the Negro population during the past two decades as they have moved off the farm into the city and from the South to the North and West.

So much for the dollar gap. It is real, it remains large, but it is at best a limited analytical device. What about the data which show both absolute changes in average incomes and the changing ratios between Negro and white incomes? Are the spectacular gains of the 1940-1954 period at an end? Is the Negro's weak position about to be further weakened as white workers move more quickly ahead?

Several brief comments. There is no basis in theory or history which would lead us to expect a straight line projection of the gains made by Negroes during and immediately after World War II. However, great caution must be exercised in analyzing the nine years since 1954. Mr. Henderson shows that between 1954 and 1958 the ratio of average Negro to white incomes declined from 56.2 to 49.9 percent; in 1960 the ratio was back at 56.3; and in 1961 it declined again to 52.2. Fluctuations of this magnitude within such a few years are a warning against extracting and projecting any trend.

Professor Henderson provides us with important income data but he fails to explore them fully; for instance, the finding that Negroes in Florida in 1960 had almost twice as high an average income as those in Mississippi ($2,798 vs. $1,444); or the fact that Negroes in the West had an average income of more than twice that of Negroes in the South ($4,937 vs. $2,322). Henderson opens up the question of income trends; he makes no effort to exhaust it. With respect to employment patterns, he remarks, *"Noteworthy is the fact that the industries with a declining rate of employment are the industries which have absorbed Negroes."* As Dale L. Hiestand indicates in his forthcoming book on *Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities for Minorities*, this finding is not particularly "noteworthy." This has been true to some extent throughout the century. Henderson's tendency to "exclude government" in considering the areas of growth of Negro employment is probably unwise. After all, government is not only our largest industry, it is also the one which is growing most rapidly.

Henderson is worried about the slow penetration of Negroes into the white collar occupations; their much higher rates of unemployment; their continued exclusion from many desirable jobs and from educational and training programs which provide access to them. He quotes the Council of Economic Advisers' estimate that the nation is losing about $17 billion annually as a result of discrimination; he warns the South of the threat to its economic progress from continued racial strife; and pleads for affirmative public action to speed the integration of the Negro – fair employment programs, minimum-wage coverage, expanded area development programs,

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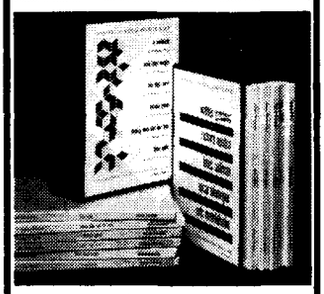

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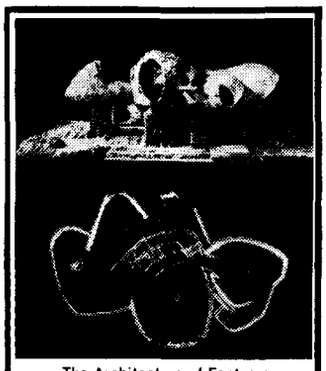

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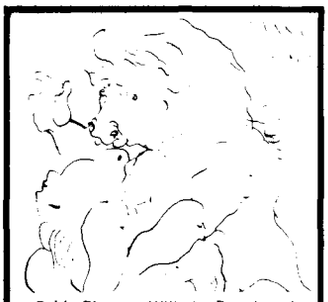

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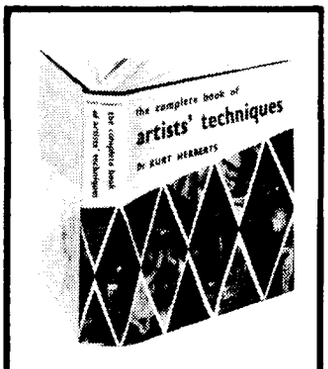

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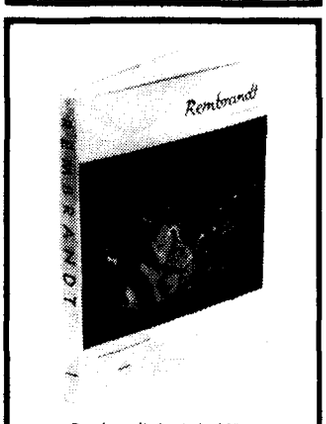

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more adult training programs, and of course school desegregation.

I have set out as faithfully as I could the highlights of Henderson's analysis, evaluation, and policy recommendations. How does my interpretation of the data differ from his? First, I consider it dangerous to pursue studies on the economic position of the American Negro which treat the Negro population in general, or in a few major subdivisions, such as Negroes in the South and in the rest of the nation. At a minimum, rural Negroes should be distinguished from urban Negroes. We need to know more about significant sub-groups such as by region, education, mobility, family structure, and still other characteristics. Averages sometimes hide more than they disclose. We cannot develop sound public and private programs without much more refined diagnoses of the disabilities that various groups of Negroes experience. Color may not even be the greatest handicap which many Negroes must overcome. At the last NAACP Convention in Chicago I stated my belief that racial discrimination ranks *fifth* in the cause of high Negro unemployment. The first four are slackness in the rate of national economic expansion, heavy concentration of Negroes in the South which has long been an area of surplus manpower, the relatively poor educational background of most Negroes, and the relatively high attachment of Negroes to industries most affected by automation, such as meat packing, auto, steel. To make this point most sharply: If all the Negroes in America were to lose pigmentation overnight, how many of the problems would be solved, how many would persist?

My priorities for action differ from Henderson's, as might be expected. I am concerned that unless we attain a higher level of employment throughout the economy, millions of Negroes as well as millions of white workers will be robbed of the opportunity to live meaningful lives and to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society. Job creation is the major challenge on the domestic front. In this connection we need special efforts directed at providing jobs for young people and for the surplus manpower on farms and in the South. Such a three-pronged employment effort would prove of inestimable assistance to many Negroes most in need of help. No other policy can do so much for so many so quickly.

Next, we need expanded education and training programs to strengthen weak academic and vocational schools and to establish new and expand existing training opportunities for adults, white as well as Negro.

Thirdly, we must proceed energetically to remove discriminatory practices from all aspects of our public life, and also from our private lives. The rejection of human beings from full participation in the economy or society on irrelevant grounds of sex, age, religion, national origin, or race, is as destructive of the individual against whom it is directed as it is injurious to the welfare and security of the nation.

For 344 years Negroes have sought justice from the white majority. They still wait for it. They must keep on demanding their political and civil rights, and they will finally attain them. The other types of help which they, as a handicapped group, need should be part of a national, not a racial program. In the past the Negro has made significant gains when he has been included in important national efforts – the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the New Deal, the CIO, World War II, the expansion of public programs for health, education, and welfare. There is little prospect that white America will do much for the handicapped Negro group. But we *can* expect our democracy to attend to its less fortunate citizens, Negroes included. All America needs a higher level of employment, more and better education, a closer approximation to true equality. To the extent that we move energetically towards these national goals, to that extent will the status of the Negro be improved.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Eli Ginzberg, *professor of economics and director of the Conservation of Human Resources Project at Columbia University, is the author of a forthcoming book,* The Cup of Liberty. David I. Segal *is an editor in a New York publishing house.*

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To the Guillotine

by David I. Segal

Stick Your Neck Out tells the story of Atuk, a poor but dishonest Eskimo, who, armed only with his blank verse and his guile, came down from Baffin Bay to Toronto to seek his fortune. It is by Mordecai Richler, the young Canadian novelist whose last book, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, is about a young Toronto Jew, who, armed only with imagination and guile

Stick Your Neck Out
by Mordecai Richler
(Simon & Schuster; $3.95)

– well, the two novels have in common a preoccupation with the meaning of success and the means most useful for its achievement. They have a good many themes in common, but technically they are entirely different. *Kravitz* is essentially naturalistic, with a few bursts of wild humor. It is by James T. Farrell, out of Philip Roth, and it is very good. But *Stick Your Neck Out* is something else.

In his new novel Richler has done two rare things – produced an original book, and an extremely funny one. The best parts are as perceptive and amusing as anything in recent fiction. The whole thing is a bitter vaudeville show, redeeming its lack of form by the expertness of its turns. What shape the book has is provided by the rise and fall of Atuk. He achieves his first success as a fake primitive poet, chanting beat Eskimo verses in coffee houses. While describing the complex forces that turn Atuk into a celebrity Richler has a lot of wise fun with the notion of Art as Commodity. The purposes of art, clearly, are buying and selling; making and breaking reputations; and providing the content of conversations. If Atuk's poetry meant anything the effect would be as disastrous to his entrepreneurs as it would be to the manufacturers of white bread if their bakers inadvertently kept the flavor of the product. In both cases, the consumer might find that he had an opinion of his own. Now, in the absence of anything to form an opinion of, he relies on the word of his betters.

Finding the world of poetry too chancy, Atuk imports some relatives, locks them in a basement and sets them to manufacturing Eskimo artifacts. In the end he rises from being a manufacturer of articles of trade to the apotheosis of becoming himself vendable. He is named first contestant on the ultimate quiz show. Head in a guillotine, facing one million dollars, he is told: "Stick Your Neck Out." In the world of fairy tales it is unquestionably noble to wager your life that you can answer the questions, and win the Princess, for she represents the heart's desire. The modern heart, bereft of romance, happily settles for the sum of a million dollars.

This is the main turn, but the subsidiary acts are very good, also. Richler is obsessed with Jewish anti-Semitism (as he was in Duddy Kravitz), which he uses to represent general self-hatred. My favorite character in the book is one Rory Peel (né Panofski), whose three children are named Neil, Valerie, and Garth. He introduces himself: "My name's Peel. I'm Jewish." He has an expensive air raid shelter, in which he and his family practice repelling neighbors, using Brunhilde, their maid, as the enemy. He takes a general wrong so common it has become acceptable to us, and recreates it in terms of a particular everyday event, leading us along by his matter-of-fact tone to the inevitable disaster. Thus, Richler on the Affluent Society: "Wayne, their first-born, had got off to a bad start. He was underweight. The doctors prescribed vitamins, and, as the Peels could well afford it, they administered triple the recommended dose. The child put on weight – lots of weight – until finally, too healthy to live, he died."

Another of his methods is to connect two human institutions of very different moral weight – "an enterprising priest" who gave away trading stamps in the confession box.

With this book Richler has shown himself to be a writer not yet in complete control of his originality and

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power. The novel contains frequent mechanical variations on jokes that weren't much to begin with. Too many scenes in which Eskimos talk about marriage outside the tribe in a very Jewish way, for instance, but he has a passionate anger at the way things are, and the kind of wild imagination that Joseph Heller unleashed in *Catch-22*. Most of the characters in *Stick Your Neck Out* are apprentice Milo Minderbinders – who don't realize that Minderbinderish behavior is in accordance with the logic of our society. They use stealth and hypocrisy in place of his proud openness, but they are learning.

FILMS

Wanton Women, Modest Men

Jean-Luc Godard made his directorial debut with *Breathless*, one of the best films of the new French group, trenchant and anarchic. His next two full-length films have not been shown here; all we have seen is the episode he made for *Seven Capital Sins*, which was commonplace. His fourth feature, *My Life to Live*, just released, is empty and pretentious. Much arty apparatus has been employed in it, but it only emphasizes the absence of content.

My Life to Live (Union)
The Suitor (Atlantic)
The Conjugal Bed (Embassy)

Godard tells here the story of a contemporary Parisienne, a sales-clerk, whose poverty forces her into prostitution and who is eventually murdered in a fight between two gangs of procurers. She is meant to be a victim of blind forces that have nothing against her specifically, that simply run over her as a truck crushes a bug. This sounds like a potentially good film, but Godard has not made it. His picture is only a collection of stylistic devices, without characterization, without credible motivation, without even the pathos of a believable puppet at the mercy of believable mindless evil. The display of devices begins right at the beginning. The first shot is of the backs of the heads of the girl and her ex-husband sitting at a café counter; the shot lasts a good five minutes while they talk.

This technical eccentricity is intended, I suppose, to undermine our possible objections to the vacuousness of the scene and the irritation of the manner; we are to be persuaded that the director who dares to do this *couldn't* make a scene as hollow as this one seems to be. Similar devices follow. In fact, the whole film consists of effects laid on like flat impassive strokes of a broad brush, one next to the other. Many of the scenes move obliquely, end abruptly, and are intrinsically dull: a long conversation with a café philosopher; the writing of a letter, photographed large word by large word; a long excerpt from Dreyer's film *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, which the girl attends and which is meant to be, I think, a booby trap for facile symbolists. As is her name – Nana. (In other words, you prove your cleverness by *not* taking Joan's martyrdom as a parallel for Nana's; and the Zola reference is to be ignored as too obvious. Such are the games of the chi-chi.)

The film is divided into twelve episodes, each with Brechtian titles, but neither the titles nor anything else tells us for example, why, though Nana has a job, she cannot pay her rent and is forced into prostitution or why she is killed by the rival gangs although she is not in the crossfire of their fight. The omissions and intrusions are so dogged that we are meant to be ashamed to ask these questions. *La vie*, we are supposed to know, is *la vie, non?* For me, however, it was not *la vie* but *la vogue:* emptiness modishly dolled up.

Godard's first, good film left us wondering whether it was a lucky accident. The most charitable view is that the question is still unanswered. His new picture seems to exist simply for discussions in gassy film journals.

Two modestly amusing comedies have arrived, one French and one Italian.

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Pierre Etaix is the co-author, director and leading actor of *The Suitor*, an essay in the style of Buster Keaton. We find the same moody, shy, rich young man, the same oxymoronic glacial passion, the same tussles with a large voluptuous aggressive girl (Laurence Ligneres instead of Keaton's Thelma Todd), the same sudden animation of the inanimate. He thinks he's standing on a platform, but it's a baggage truck that carries him off just as he's about to embrace his girl – the way that the locomotive wheel on which Keaton sits in *The General* suddenly dandles him.

Etaix lacks Keaton's personal appeal: the suggestion of poetry behind a face frozen in defense against a crass world. Also, Etaix never reaches the heights of Keaton's comic invention; his gags and plot are not equally funny. But at least he has made a picture that lives comfortably in the land of refined physical comedy.

The Conjugal Bed introduces Ugo Tognazzi, an established actor of the Italian stage and screen, a pleasant, confident, but nicely vulnerable "average guy." He plays a fortyish Roman husband who marries an intensely religious girl. With marriage, her zeal finds another outlet. The poor husband, trying to satisfy his insatiable wife, worrying about begetting a child and running his business, is weakly frantic. He takes to working late at night in order to protect himself; she then visits his office, where there is a sofa. He retreats for a week to a monastery; she is waiting at the gate with a car and, on the way home, maneuvers him into a wayside non-rest. When at last they have a child, the rapidly aging husband hopes, mistakenly, that he will be granted respite.

This film from abroad thus demonstrates that one touch of nature makes the whole world Kinsey; and it does so with some funny scenes. But there are two real flaws. First, there is no preparation for the grim ending; and this is allied to the second flaw, the performance of the wife by Marina Vlady. She is simply a moon-faced maid. The film ends with a hint that she is not only after her husband's partner but his business. Miss Vlady does not convince as an innocent female predator, whose innocence may be valid or may be educed to protect her from knowledge of herself. With this character unrealized, the farce lacks a steel filament to hold it together and give it the final sting. Still, there is enough rueful truth here and there to make married men laugh defensively.

Stanley Kauffmann

Correspondence

The New Republic *welcomes communications in regard to subjects of current interest. Those of 300 words or less are most suitable for publication.*

Wallace Nothwithstanding

Sirs:

I find the judgments expressed in your lead note, ("Wallace Notwithstanding") (Sept. 21), questionable and the selection of facts distorting in the extreme.

You find voluntary desegregation making progress in the South. Nine years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, South Carolina has 11 out of 250,000 Negro children in school with whites. Desegregation was court ordered. In Georgia, less than 100 Negroes out of 325,000 attend desegregated schools. All but 5 were court ordered. In Alabama it took 4 court orders (which means 4 long and expensive lawsuits) to enroll 21 Negro pupils. Approximately one out of every 11,000 Negro children in Alabama now goes to an integrated school. As your editorial suggests, Mississippi *may* achieve this rate of progress next September. There has never been any voluntary school desegregation in Louisiana. Due to court orders in Baton Rouge, a handful of high school seniors go to the white school. Desegregation from the highest grades down cannot begin to compensate for eleven years of substandard, segregated education. In New Orleans, the number desegregated is higher (a few hundred out of a Negro enrollment of 60,000), but all progress has been the result of a bitter and drawn out lawsuit. (It goes back to 1951 and shows no signs of abating.) While the figures are less start-

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ling, the story is generally the same in Florida, North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee. In none of these states do more than 2 percent of the Negro school children attend school with whites. It is true that a greater percentage of school districts have desegregated before being ordered to by the federal courts but most still wait until a lawsuit is threatened and some desegregate while one is in progress. Such tactics are often very successful with the school board escaping a strict court order and able thereby to resegregate or do nothing the following year. The price is usually admitting five or ten Negro children. Offhand, in all of these nine states, I cannot think of more than one or two major cities which have done anything at all about desegregation without the prodding of court action. It is just not true that "most of the work has been done by Southerners themselves" unless one means the Southern Negro children, parents and lawyers who overcome cultural deprivation, economic reprisal and threat of violence to fight the system.

Southerners are far from accepting school desegregation in principle as you conclude. Space permits but one example: Within the last six months three Southern school boards have made elaborate and expensive attempts to convince federal judges that Negroes are biologically inferior to whites.

Michael Meltsner
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

In reply:

Southern School News reports that 1,129 out of 3,053 bi-racial districts in Southern and Border states have begun desegregation. This leaves almost 2,000 still segregated, and many if not most of these show little disposition to move without a court order. It is also true that many of the "desegregating" districts have moved grudgingly and minimally, as evidenced by the tiny percentage of Negro pupils actually in mixed classrooms.

We were not ignoring the token nature of these changes, but applauding the growing acceptance of the inevitable in the South, in contrast to Wallace's die-hard stance, which used to be the fashion elsewhere. The inevitable is not yet true integration; it is merely a formal change in school policy and the admission of a handful of Negro children to formerly all-white schools. In the light of recent Southern history, there is nothing wrong with hailing an increase in voluntary acceptance of the letter, if not often the spirit, of the 1954 decision. Tokenism is what is meant by accepted in principle, to which we attach value, without mistaking it for the millennium. Nor is it amiss to say that "most of the work has been done by Southerners themselves" if this is meant as we do mean it, to include those Negro Southerners who have worked harder than anybody.

In short, Mr. Meltsner may feel with some justification that we overemphasized the positive, but he need only keep reading *The New Republic* to get plenty of the other side. THE EDITORS

City of Night

Sirs:

Richard Gilman's review of John Rechy's *City of Night* (September 14) seemed clearly to be one of the more cogent comments on that work. It was surprising therefore to see John Womack's letter accusing Mr. Gilman of "deliberately misreading" the book and treating it with "sophisticated hostility." The basic tenor of the review was one of regret over the fact that Mr. Rechy suffered from a surfeit of undigested experience. That a man could endure such a personal hell and not only learn nothing from it but feel the need to falsify the reality of his own experience with the attitudes of other men is indeed an occasion for disappointment. Mr. Gilman rightly requires, that in a serious literary work mere happening be transfigured into meaning. An examination of species is scarcely the credentials of the imaginative work. If it were, then any biology text might be advanced for serious consideration.

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Urban Renewal and the City

Sirs:

It may be hoped that Wolf Von Eckardt's valuable series, "Urban Renewal and the City," is being widely read, for it encompasses vast and complex issues in compact space. His observations as to St. Louis and its Mill Creek Valley redevelopment (September 21) are concurred with by many residents.

Having made the arrangements under which Edmund N. Bacon, Executive Director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, wrote an article for *The Post-Dispatch* of last January 27, which raised questions about Mill Creek Planning, I feel a responsibility for urging that Bacon be identified as having originated some of the points, as well as some of the cogent language, which *The New Republic* now puts before a broader audience. Bacon pointed out the danger that the thrust of the axis from the Eero Saarinen Gateway Arch might expire "in a whimper of confusion" in Mill Creek, and the contrast here with the Eiffel Tower's clear relationship with the Champs-de-Mars.

George McCue
Art News Editor
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

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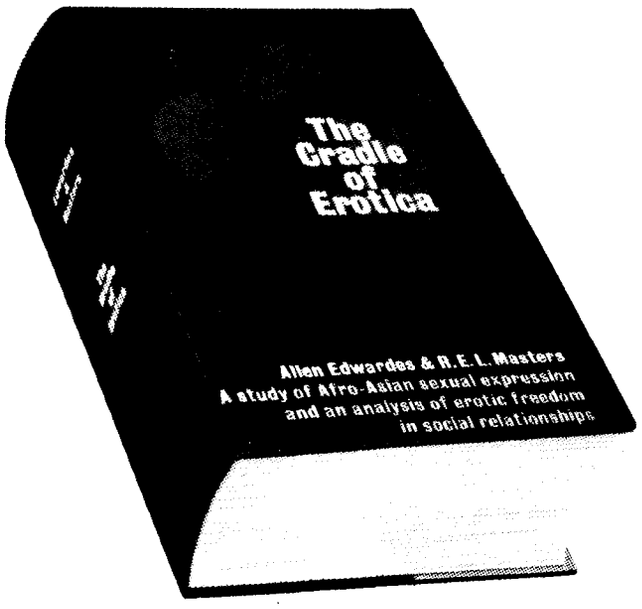
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